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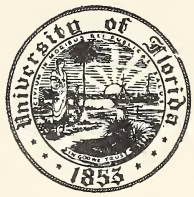

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REMAINS

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1957

The Church in Chester
1300-1540

BY

DOUGLAS JONES, M.A.

MANCHESTER
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PREFACE

THE history of popular religion is profoundly important to all who seek to understand the life of past ages, but in a very real sense it is a history which can never be written. In so far as religion is " what a man does with his solitariness ", it is hard to see how it can ever be the subject of a satisfactory scientific enquiry.

One can, it is true, learn much from contemporary devotional literature, but there are too many imponderables for us to be able, for example, to say : This is what the Christian faith meant to the common man in the fifteenth century. If the historian does make such statements, if the present writer has fallen into the error of doing so, he does no more than cast an appearance of objective scholarship over the creation of his own imagination and his own prejudices.

The subject-matter of the following study is not, then, strictly speaking, the religious life of the period under review. It could not be ; that life died with those of our ancestors who participated in it. No amount of imaginative reconstruction can take us into the inner life of the shadowy inhabitants of medieval Chester who people the following pages.

Men, however, are not purely spiritual beings. In all times and places, the inner life is expressed in outward forms, and this is especially true of the later middle ages. Beyond private experience, religion was the stuff of the everyday life of the community, continually finding expression in social forms, in public ceremonial and corporate institutions.

There is, therefore, much which the historian of Chester can do, in depicting the outward and visible machinery of religion, and of the social life of the city in so far as it concerned itself with religious objects. From local and ecclesiastical records, he may hope to reconstruct, in more or less detail, the fortunes of the several parish churches, and of the priests who ministered in them. He may hope to answer, at least in part, questions relative to the family origins, educational attainments and social status of the several classes of religious and secular clergy with which he has to deal, and, with greater certainty, those about non-residence, pluralism and the exercise of advowson rights. The history of the fabric of the parish church and of the altars which stood within it, can tell him much of medieval devotion in its material aspects ; the extent, in fact, to which the various elements in the community were prepared to pay for the maintenance of its religious institutions.

The financial and constitutional history of the abbey, the nunnery and the collegiate church of St. John, well illustrates the contrasts of wealth and poverty to be found among the ecclesiastical foundations of later medieval England. How far was the great wealth of the church

misapplied? What proportion of it was devoted to educational or charitable uses? What evidence is there for gross extravagance or scandalous misapplication of funds? All these are strictly historical questions, which he may attempt to answer as far as the documentary material at his disposal will permit. Lastly, he can trace the relations between the church and the secular power. On the one hand, he can present, in some detail, the history of the chequered relations of the civic authorities with such prominent ecclesiastical neighbours as the abbot of St. Werburgh's and the dean of St. John's, while on the other, he may illustrate, from local circumstances, some aspects of the wider rivalries of king, pope and bishop.

Throughout this discussion, he will always be most sure of himself where the affairs of the church impinge most frequently upon the affairs of the everyday world. The clerical magistrate and the clerical landlord will always be more real to him than the priest.

This is where the discipline of local history has so valuable a contribution to make. Religious history, more than most sorts of history, is essentially concerned with the lives of "mute, inglorious", ordinary people. It is often by the intensive study of conditions in one small locality that we can best discover the complex of concrete situations that lay behind the paper systems of bureaucrats and publicists.

The local historian, however, need not be lost in the antiquary, and indeed he is only a true historian while he treats of local circumstances within the context of the national scene. With this awareness of wider issues, he has a contribution to make to purely local studies, which the antiquarian, although his knowledge of the district may be more profound, is rarely able to offer.

The historian of medieval Chester is happy in the extent and character of his documentary material. In addition to the national series in the Public Record Office, he possesses the volume known as the Black Prince's Register, which is a valuable and almost unworked mine of information on all aspects of life in the County Palatine. There is, in the city itself, a large collection of municipal court books and rolls, which, although they have suffered much from neglect in the past, are now well kept and readily accessible to students. Above all, there is the wonderful series of notebooks in the Harleian collection, which represents the Herculean labours of a line of devoted and learned antiquaries, Archdeacon Rogers, Samuel Erdeswick and the four Randle Holmes.

In the writing of this book, I owe much to a number of scholars who have been most generous with their time and advice. My teachers, Professor G. Barraclough and Mr. A. R. Myers of Liverpool University, have given me their guidance throughout. Mr. W. Fergusson Irvine and Mr. J. H. E. Bennett were both kind enough to read the whole book in typescript, and they were able to draw my attention to many of its

shortcomings and errors. Nor is that the extent of my debt to them. This study would have been impossible but for their joint labours over many years as editors of the *Cheshire Sheaf*, while Mr. Irvine's work on St. Mary's convent and Mr. Bennett's on the mendicant orders provided most of the material which I have used on these topics. Mrs. Hester Jenkins gave me the benefit of her researches into the records of the Lichfield chapter, and Mr. R. Sharpe France, the Lancashire County Archivist, communicated the substance of a document in his custody. Professor E. F. Jacob has given me much valuable editorial advice. Dr. G. H. Tupling has very kindly read the whole book in proof.

My thanks are also due to the archivists and keepers of the several record repositories of which I have made use. The late Mr. Murray-Shearer, the then Registrar of Lichfield, gave me every facility for my researches in the episcopal muniments, and a like courtesy was shown to me by Dr. I. Churchill, Lambeth Librarian, by Miss M. Groombridge, then the Chester City Archivist, and by the officials of the Public Record Office and of the Manuscripts Department of the British Museum.

Nor must I fail to acknowledge my obligation to Professor C. H. Philips, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, without whose encouragement, after my interests had been turned in another direction, this book would probably never have been completed.

D. H. J.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ball, *Church Plate*	T. S. Ball, *The Church Plate of the City of Chester.*
Burne	R. V. H. Burne, "The Dissolution of St. Werburgh's Abbey". *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. 37, Part I.
Cal. Clos.	*Calendar of Close Rolls.*
Cal. Pat.	*Calendar of Patent Rolls.*
C.N.W.A.A.S.	*The Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society.*
Cooper Scott	S. Cooper Scott, *Lectures on the History of S. John Baptist Church and Parish, in the City of Chester.*
C.P.L.	*Calendar of Papal Letters.*
C.R.R.	*Chester Recognizance Rolls.*
D.N.B.	*Dictionary of National Biography.*
Dugdale	W. Dugdale, *Monasticon.*
Earwaker, *St. Mary's*	J. P. Earwaker, *The History of the Church and Parish of St. Mary on the Hill, Chester.*
E.E.T.S.	*Early English Text Society.*
E.H.R.	*English Historical Review.*
Farell, *Holy Trinity*	L. M. Farrell, *The Parish Registers of Holy Trinity, Chester.*
Gastrell	F. Gastrell, ed. F. R. Raines, *Notitia Cestriensis.*
Harl.	Harleian MSS.
Hennessey	G. Hennessey, *Novum Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense.*
Hewitt	H. J. Hewitt, *Medieval Cheshire.*
Hist. Soc. Lancs & Ches.	*Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.*
Jacka	H. T. Jacka, The Dissolution of the English Nunneries (an unpublished thesis of the University of London).
Le Neve	J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, ed. T. Duffus Hardy.
Lich. Reg.	Lichfield Episcopal Registers.
Morris	R. H. Morris, *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns.*
Ormerod	G. Ormerod, *History of the County Palatine and City of Chester.*
Pantin	W. A. Pantin, *General and Provincial Chapters of the English Black Monks.*

Piccope	G. J. Piccope, ed. *Wills and Inventories from the Ecclesiastical Court, Chester.*
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
P.R.O., Min. Acc.	Public Record Office, Ministers' Accounts.
Reg. Arundel	Register of Archbishop Arundel.
Reg. Chichele	E. F. Jacob (Vol. II with H. C. Johnson). *The Register of Henry Chichele.*
Reg. Gilbert	J. H. Parry, ed. *Registrum Johannis Gilbert* (Bishop of Hereford).
Reg. Greenfield	W. Brown and A. H. Thompson, ed. *Register of William Greenfield* (Archbishop of York).
Reg. Morton	Register of Archbishop Morton.
Reg. Shrewsbury	T. S. Holmes, ed. *The Register of Ralph of Shrewsbury* (Bishop of Bath and Wells).
Reg. Stretton	R. A. Wilson, ed. *The Registers of Robert de Stretton* (Bishop of Lichfield).
Reg. Sutton	R. M. T. Hill, ed. *The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton* (of Lincoln).
Reg. Welles	W. P. W. Phillimore and F. N. Davies, ed. *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles* (Bishop of Lincoln).
Rymer	T. Rymer and R. Sanderson, *Foedera.*
Wm. Salt. Soc.	William Salt Society, Birmingham. *Collections for a History of Staffordshire.*
Simpson, *St. Peter's*	F. A. Simpson, *History of the Church of St. Peter in Chester.*
Somerville	R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster.*
Tait, *Chartulary*	J. Tait, ed. *Chartulary of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester.*
Taxatio	*Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate Papae Nicholai IV.*
Tout	T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England.*
Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.*
Valor	*Valor Ecclesiasticus.*
V.C.H.	*Victoria History of the Counties of England.*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

LIKE that of so many other cities founded by the Romans, much of Chester's importance derived from its strategic position. Situated at the highest navigable point of the Dee, it was a vital centre of communication with Wales, with Ireland, and with the whole of north-west England. Easily fortified, it was both a key point in the defence against Welsh encroachments and the obvious base for military operations in North Wales. It is not, therefore, surprising that Chester first rose to prominence among English towns as the seat of the most powerful of the marcher earldoms.

It was unique in England, with the exception of Durham, as the seat of a provincial government; a government which was strengthened when, after the extinction of the old line of Norman earls in 1237, the earldom passed into the hands of the crown. It was in his capacity as earl that the king, or the prince of Wales when there was one, exercised all the powers of government within the palatinate. The administration at Chester castle was a miniature of that at Westminster, with its own justiciar and chamberlain, and its own exchequer.

The strategic importance of the city and its direct subordination to the crown were favourable to the growth of municipal independence. The citizens obtained the grant of a guild merchant at about the end of the twelfth century,[1] and the fee-farm of all crown revenues within the city a hundred years later.[2] A mayor was first appointed some time in the first half of the thirteenth century,[3] and two elective coroners in 1300.[4] Chester was one of the earliest of all English towns to attain these several stages in the process of emancipation from feudal control.[5]

It is clear that in Chester, as was usually the case elsewhere,[6] the municipal government was closely linked with the guild merchant from

[1] Confirmed by Earl Randle Blundeville, 1190–1212. (Ballard, *British Borough Charters*, vol. I, p. 206.)

[2] By a charter of Edward I, 1300. (Tait and Ballard, *British Borough Charters*, vol. II, p. 324.)

[3] The first year in which a mayor certainly held office is 1241. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, vol. XXXIV, p. 24.)

[4] Tait and Ballard, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

[5] Chester had its own purely urban sheriffs before any other English city. J. Tait, *Chartulary of St. Werburgh's Abbey*, vol. I, p. 53. It was also the first to obtain its own coroners. Hopkins, *Chester City Courts*, p. xii.

[6] Cf. Thomas, *Town Government*, p. 16.

the twelfth century onward,[1] and that, in the fourteenth century at least, the freemen of the town were identical with the members of the guild. There is, however, no record, earlier than the charter granted by Henry VII in 1506, of the mode by which the city officers were chosen. In the sixteenth century, the mayor was indirectly elected, the "citizens" putting forward the names of two of the aldermen and the final choice remaining with the latter body.[2] The two sheriffs were elected by a similar process, and the remainder of the city officers were nominated by the mayor, with the advice and consent of his "brethren", the aldermen.[3] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the mayor was assisted in his duties by a body of twenty-four aldermen, and by a common council of forty members,[4] who, according to the charter of 1506, were to be chosen annually by the citizens and community of Chester. At least the formal assent of these bodies was required for all the municipal legislation, but the mayor was virtually absolute in matters of day-to-day administration. Membership of the aldermanic bench, whatever the charter might say, was in practice for life, and it was by the nomination of the aldermen themselves that common councillors were elevated to fill the vacancies created by death, and that new members of the common council were chosen from the general body of freemen. In short, the government of the city was in the hands of a narrow burgess oligarchy, whose power was only tempered by the occasional intervention in the city's affairs of the most socially powerful of the county gentry.[5]

Although the effects of Welsh hostility have frequently been exaggerated,[6] the state of the border was often disturbed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In spite of the growth of trade with Ireland and Gascony,[7] this can hardly have been a prosperous and happy period in Chester's history.

The Welsh campaigns of Edward I issued in quieter times. Fourteenth-century Chester suffered, like the rest of England, from the Black Death, from economic dislocation, from labour disputes, and from the licensed disorders of bastard feudalism,[8] yet it was this century which

[1] Thus the two levelookers, in origin the guild officers who were responsible for the collection of the protective tolls imposed upon non-freemen, were regarded as the senior aldermen down to the end of this period. (*Morris*, p. 398. Mayor's Books, *passim*.)

[2] *Morris*, pp. 180–2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Thus we hear in 1539 that "of late tyme diverse officers . . . have been electyd and chosen . . . by the meanes and labour of gentyllmen in the countrye". (*Ibid.*, p. 386.)

[6] Cf. G. Barraclough, "The Earldom and County Palatine of Chester", *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, vol. CIII, p. 23 *et seq.*

[7] Cf. *Hewitt*, p. 133 *et seq.*

[8] There were serious disturbances, for example, in 1353. The prince of Wales, with the earls of Lancaster, Warwick and Stafford, entered the city with an armed

saw the height of her medieval fortunes.[1] Courted by Richard II, the Palatinate was inevitably under a cloud in the early years of Henry IV. The widespread support for the rebellion of Henry Percy in July, 1403,[2] called down upon city and county the severe punitive measures of the Lancastrian victors of Shrewsbury.[3] The associated rebellion of Owen Glendower had a shattering effect upon Chester's trade, and caused severe distress throughout the whole neighbourhood. By the second quarter of the fifteenth century, the silting up of the Dee beyond Parkgate had begun to present a grave threat to the city's commerce.[4] At the same time, prosperity was further undermined by the grave increase in violent faction and organized crime, which continued to be a chronic evil until the end of the century. In 1412, for example, it was reported to the prince of Wales, " that divers of the commonalty of the said city were banded together, forcibly to disturb the free election of a mayor ".[5] The judicial independence of the County Palatine, the fact that the king's writ did not run there, made it a natural storm centre in all times of political disturbance.[6] It would have been remarkable if Cheshire, " the seed-plot of gentry ", had escaped the abuses of livery and maintenance. Chester must have suffered from such feuds as that between John Kyngesley, esq., and Sir John Savage, which disrupted local society in the years before the civil wars,[7] and, of course, war itself brought new disasters.[8]

force for the protection of the justices and opened an inquisition of trailbaston. (*Morris*, p. 25.) In 1399, there was a great riot, outside St. Peter's church, between the master weavers and their journeymen. (*Morris*, p. 32.) In 1393 Sir Baldwin Radington, with a band of armed followers, invaded the precincts of the abbey itself. (Morris, *Diocesan Histories, Chester*, p. 82.)

[1] Cf. *Hewitt*, pp. 68, 124 ; the preamble to the grant of remission of the fee-farm, 23 Hen. VI, speaks at length of the prosperous days of Edward I, when there was a good harbour, and much resort of traders both citizens and foreigners. (*Morris*, p. 459.)

[2] Ramsey, *Lancaster and York*, vol. I, p. 59. Wylie, *England under Henry IV*, vol. I, p. 357. Numbered among the supporters of Percy were the parsons of Rostherne, Hawarden, Pulford, Doddleston, Handley and Davenham.

[3] A fine of 300 marks was imposed upon the city. (*Cal. Pat., 1401–5*, p. 330.)

[4] A grant of remission of the fee-farm, 1 Rich. III, refers to the fact that the Dee has been silting up for sixty years, " adeo quod dictus portus penitus distruitur ". (*Morris*, p. 520.)

[5] *Morris*, p. 47.

[6] *Hewitt*, p. 71. For example, in Dec., 1399, complaints reached the prince of Wales, " from people of Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Derbyshire, of bodies of armed men, entering the said counties from the county of Chester, and, having committed great robberies, returning thither with their booty ". (*Morris*, p. 28.)

[7] *Morris*, p. 52. Several leading citizens, such as John Hawarden and John Hope, are also said to have distributed liveries to their supporters. (*Ibid.*, p. 51.)

[8] Thus we are told, rather cryptically, that in 1454 the " commonalty rose ". (*Ibid.*, p. 55.) In 1465, there was almost a regular local war between the citizens and the Lancastrian garrison in North Wales, which captured and hanged Richard Bryne, an ex-mayor. (*Ibid.*, p. 57.)

The fee-farm of the city, fixed at £100 in 1300,[1] remained unchanged throughout most of the fourteenth century. A series of reductions had brought it down to £20 by 1506.[2] The preamble to the grant of that year speaks of the impossibility of bringing ships to within twelve miles of the town, and of a serious decline of population,[3] consequent upon the loss of trade. The walls are said to have been in ruins, and a quarter of the town desolate and uninhabited. No doubt this plea of poverty is as exaggerated as such pleas usually are when made to tax-collectors, but the total evidence of grave decline cannot be misinterpreted.

Nor does our evidence suggest that prosperity was quick to return in the more peaceful times which followed. Canon Morris' table, compiled from the sheriffs' books in the municipal archives, of the number of ships entering the port each year, suggests that the lowest point of depression was, in fact, only reached in 1509, and that it was only the last few years of the reign of Henry VIII which saw the volume of trade increase markedly beyond the level maintained in Henry VI's reign.[4]

It is curious that Chester, the natural provincial capital of the north-western plain, did not long continue to be the seat of a bishopric. The transfer of the see of Lichfield to Chester was decreed in 1075, in accordance with Lanfranc's well-known policy of establishing sees in the largest provincial centres, and the collegiate church of St. John the Baptist, just outside the city walls to the south-east, became the cathedral of the new see. The rebuilding of this church, in a style commensurate with its new dignity, was set on foot, but in 1102 the second post-conquest bishop moved to Coventry. His immediate object was certainly to secure the wealthy abbey of St. Mary there, but there were probably

[1] Tait and Ballard, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 146.

[2] In 1351, the fee-farm was still fixed at £100. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 53.) In Aug., 1445, the king released the city of £50 per annum for a period of fifty years, in consideration of the decay of the port, which was attributed to the silting up of the river and to the civil war in Wales. (*Eighth Report of Deputy Keeper*, p. 359.) Throughout these years, the crown made successive grants of murage to the city, for repairs of walls, pavements and bridges. Richard III remitted £73 per annum of the farm for ten years, and, in 1506, Henry VII reduced it permanently to £20 per annum, in consideration of the extreme poverty of the city. (*Ibid.*, p. 339.)

[3] The grant of 1445 also tells us that " many citizens and other inhabitants withdrawing themselves, on account of the great and insupportable burden of the fee-farm, . . . the greater part of our said city is wasted, desolate, and very sparsely inhabited ". (*Ibid.*, p. 359.)

[4] *Morris*, p. 573. Traders had another reason, besides the increased difficulties of navigation, to divert business to Liverpool. Thus, in 1533 (9 April), the king wrote to the mayor and aldermen of Dublin to the effect that he had heard, that, for three years past, they had forbidden merchants trading in Dublin to take their ships to Chester, and had recently renewed this " unlawful act ", for seven years, " by which reason, and because they go to the creek of Lyverpole, the king is defrauded of his customs ". (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. VI, p. 148.)

other considerations too. It has been suggested that the bishop felt his own church to be overshadowed by the earl's refoundation of St. Werburgh's in 1093. He is more likely to have been influenced by the endemic hostilities with the Welsh, which in these years kept Chester permanently in "the front line".

After 1102, the bishop seems never to have resided at Chester, or to have been enthroned there.[1] Whatever may have been the position in the twelfth century, the canons of St. John's had abandoned, by 1300, all claim to participate in his election. Nevertheless, Chester continued to provide the usual title of the see until the end of the twelfth century, a title which continued in frequent use in the following century, though losing ground in favour of that of Coventry, and which was not unknown even in the sixteenth.[2]

The religious life of Chester, and indeed its economic life, too, was dominated by the richly endowed Benedictine monastery of St. Werburgh's. The monastic church with its cloisters and offices was the largest and most imposing edifice in the city, occupying, in the fifteenth century, almost a quarter of the area within the walls. Besides considerable properties in the city, the black monks held extensive lands in the neighbourhood, and their privileges presented a constant challenge to the citizens' claims to independence and autonomy.

Yet the people of Chester, unlike those of Bury St. Edmunds, had never been the mere tenants of the abbey. The demand for municipal independence had been directed against the earl, not against the black monks, and this demand had been met, and largely satisfied, at an early date in the town's development. For this reason, no doubt, the struggle between monk and burgher was neither as radical nor as violent as it so often became elsewhere. In spite of the frequently disordered state of the neighbourhood, there are no pages in the chronicle of Chester to be compared with those interludes of anarchic violence which distorted and embittered the natural development of St. Albans and Bury St. Edmunds. But, while the revolutionary element was lacking in this contest, there was no love lost between the black monks and the townspeople. The monks were tenacious and influential. They contested inch by inch the city's encroachments upon their preserves. Interminable disputes of this sort, disputes affecting tradesmen's pockets, must have frayed tempers and made really cordial relations always unobtainable.

The foundation for the religious life of the laity was provided by nine parish churches, a comparatively small number for a town of Chester's

[1] With one doubtful exception. Bishop John Burghill, translated from Llandaff in 1398 (Stubbs, *Registrum Sacrum*, p. 82), is said, on very doubtful authority, to have been enthroned in St. John's in the following year. (*Morris*, p. 32.)

[2] Hill, *English Dioceses*, p. 246 *et seq.*, and *Ormerod*, vol. I, pp. 93, 94. The bishop continued to possess a palace in Chester. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 307.)

size and importance.[1] The provision of churches in medieval towns rarely corresponded very closely to the real needs of the people. Important landowners liked to build churches for the use of themselves and their tenants. Where a large number of great men held some property in a town, there would tend to spring up a correspondingly large number of churches, many of which were always very poor and often on the verge of extinction. A check had been put on this development in Chester, both by the preponderant power of the earl, and by the great popularity which the abbey enjoyed, in the early years of its existence, with the lesser Norman baronage of the Palatinate.

The parishes of St. Oswald, the abbey church, and of the collegiate church [2] of St. John were the earliest and largest in the town.[3] St. Peter's, the church at the High Cross, is also noticed in Domesday Book.[4] All the remaining parishes, those of St. Mary on the Hill,[5] the Holy and Undivided Trinity, St. Michael, St. Bridget, St. Martin and St. Olaf,[6] were probably carved out in the course of the twelfth century, as further churches were built by the earl and his barons. St. Mary's, which included a considerable tract of country outside the city boundaries,[7] was relatively well endowed, but the others consisted only of small seg-

[1] Thus the seventy-seven parish churches at Winchester (Furley, *Town Life in the Fourteenth Century*, p. 103), and the nineteen at Exeter (E. L. Cutts, *Parish Priests and their People*, p. 498), served populations which were certainly no greater than that of Chester, while Lincoln and Norwich, both about as large again, possessed forty-six (Hill, *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 147), and about forty parishes respectively. (Cutts, *op. cit.*, p. 492.)

[2] Cf. Domesday Book, quoted *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 307. " Ecclesia Sancti Johannis in civitate habet viii domos quietas ad omni consuetudine ; una ex his est matricularii ecclesie ; aliae sunt canonicorum." The number of canons implied here is the same as that which existed throughout our period.

[3] Tait, *Chartulary of St. Werburgh's*, vol. II, p. 300. St. John's is supposed to have been founded by an Earl of Mercia in the tenth century (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 306), but it is worthy of remark that, at an inquisition held in the church in 1318, the jury reported that they did not know who was the founder. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.) In 1548, the Royal Commissioners estimated that there were 1,200 " housling people " in the parish. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 313.) The parish of St. Oswald included Idenshaw in Edisbury hundred, Croughton and Crabwell in Wirral, Hilbree island, Bache, Wervin and Great Boughton, together with the dependent chapelry of Bruera (or Churton Heath) which consisted of the townships of Churton Heath, Saighton, Huntington, and Lea cum Newbold. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 304.) The tie which held these scattered territories together was the lordship of St. Werburgh's of which they were all manors. (Tait, *Chartulary of St. Werburgh's*, vol. I, p. 118.)

[4] *Morris*, p. 115.

[5] Built by one of the early Norman earls, probably in the early years of the twelfth century. The advowson was granted to the abbey by Earl Randle Gernons. (Earwaker, *St. Mary's*, p. 2.)

[6] *Morris*, p. 115.

[7] Claverton, including the hamlet of Handbridge, Lache, Merleston, Moston and Upton near Trafford in Broxton hundred, and Little Mollington in Wirral.

ments of the city, and the three last named were probably never self-supporting

The abbey had obtained the advowson of four of the city livings. That of St. Oswald was appropriated by the monks early in the thirteenth century,[1] and they continued to cast greedy eyes upon the others in their gift, St. Peter's, St. Mary's and St. Olaf's. St. John's had never enjoyed endowments at all commensurate with its dignity as a cathedral church, and it is not, therefore, surprising to discover that the canons, by 1318, had appropriated all the city churches in their hands, St. Bridget's, St. Martin's and the chapel of St. Chad.[2] The rectory of St. Michael's was appropriated to the priory of Norton in about 1200,[3] so that only one living, that of Holy Trinity, remained in lay patronage, a circumstance by no means unusual where a town was dominated by a large monastic foundation.[4]

The religious orders were represented in Chester, in addition to St. Werburgh's, by a house of Benedictine nuns, which was probably founded by Randle Gernons, the fourth of the Norman earls of Chester, some time before 1150,[5] and a convent of each of the three mendicant orders. The friars, in 1300, were still relative newcomers, and enjoying a great popular vogue as a result of their revivalist activities. Considerable rivalry existed between the Dominicans,[6] the first arrivals, and the Franciscans who had also settled here by 1235,[7] and both offered bitter opposition to the introduction of the Carmelites in about 1290. It was only after a miraculous revelation of the special favour of St. Mary that the latter were able to advance to their subsequent position as the most popular of the three orders in the town.[8] The friars built

[1] Tait, *Chartulary of St. Werburgh's*, vol. I, p. 118.

[2] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.

[3] It was granted to the priory by Roger de Lacy, constable of Cheshire, 1190–1212. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, pp. 342, 695.) It was confirmed to that house in royal grants of 3 Ed. III and 22 Hen. VI (*Dugdale*, vol. VI, p. 314), but it does not appear to be mentioned among its possessions at the dissolution.

[4] Cutts, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

[5] Irvine (" The Nunnery of St. Mary ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XIII, p. 71) points out that the existing charter of Earl Randle, to be dated *c.* 1150, is not a foundation charter, but refers to the " nuns of Chester ", as a body already well-known.

[6] The black friars were probably induced to settle in Chester by the bishop, Alexander de Stavensby (1224–38), but Henry III had contributed alms to their support from the early days of the convent, which had therefore come to be regarded as a royal foundation. (Palmer, " Black Friars of Chester ", *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 97.)

[7] Cf. the letter to Stavensby, the favourer of the black friars, by Bishop Grosseteste, the champion of the grey, printed in Bennett, " Grey Friars of Chester ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXIV, Pt. I, pp. 12, 13. The Franciscans also had the support of the crown. (*Ibid.*, p. 15.)

[8] Bennett, " White Friars of Chester ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXI, pt. I, p. 8.

their convents, as was customary, in a poor quarter of the town,[1] and, in the thirteenth century at least, were most active as itinerant preachers over a wide area round about. It is significant both that they were able to build beautiful churches in the early days of their prosperity,[2] and that these churches had, by the dissolution, declined almost into ruins.[3]

It was one of the obligations of Christian charity to care for the infirm and the permanently disabled. The hospital of St. John the Baptist,[4] founded [5] by Earl Randle Blundeville, was rather an almshouse than a hospital in the modern sense, providing accommodation for thirteen poor men and six poor widows.[6] Although all real authority doubtless rested with the warden, the hospital was, in form, collegiate, the "brethren and sisters" being the infirm inmates themselves and the women appointed to look after them. The other hospital, at Boughton, was founded by one of the earliest Norman earls.[7] It was a leper asylum, and was dedicated to St. Giles, the patron saint of such unfortunates.

In addition to the chapels attached to these foundations, mention must be made of several other places of worship available to the citizens. A non-parochial church or chapel, dedicated to St. Chad,[8] stood on or near the site of the present General Infirmary, another, that of St. Nicholas, stood at the north end of the present Nicholas Street.[9] The monks possessed a chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas Becket, outside the northgate, and the nuns, a chapel in "Edgar's field", south of the river.[10] A chapel in Handbridge was dedicated to St. James, and a chantry was founded there by Sir John Delves in 1396,[11] while another chapel in nearby Overleigh belonged to the abbot of Basingwerk.[12] A chapel in Little Parson's Lane was given to the abbey by Richard Fitton in the reign of Henry III,[13] and the guild of St. Anne possessed another in the churchyard of St. John's.

[1] The Dominicans and Franciscans in the port area, near the Watergate.

[2] The Dominican church was selected, on at least one occasion, for the meeting of the provincial chapter of the order. (Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 99.)

[3] See page 76. Perhaps excepting that of the Carmelites. (See page 114.)

[4] The original dedication appears to have been to St. Mary and All Saints. (R. Stewart-Brown, "The Hospital of St. John the Baptist", *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Chesh.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 68.)

[5] 1190–99. (*Ibid.*)

[6] Harl. 1989, f. 436.

[7] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 352 n.

[8] *Morris*, p. 164, and information kindly supplied by Mr. Bennett.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[10] Harl. 2125, f. 267, "The ould churches in Chester, in former times, now ruinated," quoted in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 97.

[11] *Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 266.

[12] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XX, p. 26.

[13] *Ibid.*, First Series, vol. II, p. 117.

During most of our period, there was usually an occupant in the hermitage, " beyond the bridge end at Chester ", and in the anchorite's cell in St. John's churchyard. We hear also of an anchoress in St. Chad's in the reign of Edward I.[1]

[1] Clay, *Hermits and Anchorites of England*, pp. 131 and 209. In Feb., 1364, John Chorlton, anchorite of St. John's, was appointed by the bishop, during pleasure, as penitentiary for the archdeaconry of Chester, an office usually given to one of the most prominent and respected clerics in the city, and in Dec., 1366, this appointment was renewed for a further two years. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, pp. 21, 33.)

CHAPTER II

THE CLERGY AND THE RELIGIOUS

In Chester, as elsewhere, a very large proportion of the population, by modern standards, was professionally devoted to the service of religion. The chapter of St. John's consisted of the dean and seven canons, the usual English arrangement in churches of this type,[1] but the proportion of absentees among them was always high. The beneficed clergy normally resident were the rectors of St. Peter, St. Mary on the Hill, Holy Trinity and St. Olaf, the vicar of St. Oswald, and the " petty canon " of St. John's, as the senior cantarist of the altar of the Blessed Virgin there was usually called.[2] The assistant parochial chaplains and the lesser cantarists made up a much more numerous body. There were ten perpetual vicars [3] in St. John's until 1538, when the number was reduced to four. These vicars served also the parishes of St. Martin and St. Bridget. The church of St. Michael appears to have been in the charge of a parochial chaplain. In the sixteenth century, there were one or two assistant chaplains in each of the parish churches, maintained either by chantry endowments or by the free offering of their parishioners,[4] and there is no good reason to suppose that this represents a new development.[5] The total number of parochial chaplains, guild chaplains and cantarists must have amounted to something like thirty-five, to which

[1] St. Mary's in the Castle, Leicester, All Saints, Derby, St. Mary's, Shrewsbury (Hill, *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 77.)

[2] e.g. Harl. 2066, p. 154 ; *Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.

[3] Strictly there were eight vicars, one for each member of the chapter (as appears from an inquisition of 1318, Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380, and from an episcopal visitation of 1346. Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 118), but the sacristan, appointed by the dean (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 118 ; *C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 246), and the junior chaplain of the chantry of the Blessed Virgin, received the same stipends as the vicars (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 132), and came, in the course of the fourteenth century, to be reckoned among their number. (E.g. socius capellani beate Marie reputatur tamquam vicarius. Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 132.) In an award of Archbishop Arundel, dated 18 Aug. 1401, it is stated simply that there were ten vicars (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379), and the ten vicars of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* presumably included the sacristan and the " socius " of the petty canon, as these are not noticed under any other head. (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.)

[4] See list of assistant clergy in *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. XXXIII.

[5] In 1361, Richard Fylcot, parochial chaplain of St. Mary's, was appointed to the office of penitentiary for the city. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 94.) Richard Forster, chaplain, was " serving the rector " of St. Mary's in 22 Ed. IV. (Chester Pentice Rolls, No. 354.)

must be added an indeterminate number who eked out a precarious living by the celebration of occasional trentals and obits.[1]

The writer has the impression, derived from an examination of the records of the city courts, that Chester was, in fact, frequented by a much larger number of priests and clerks. The incumbents and assistant clergy of neighbouring rural parishes were under strong temptations to spend their leisure in the more congenial atmosphere of the city, and their names are frequently met with. Still others, beneficed on the other side of the county, had relations and economic interests in Chester. Many country gentlemen had town-houses in Chester, and their chaplains cannot have been unknown to the citizens. Finally, not least in numbers, we must mention the clerks employed in the earl's administration, and the officials of the church courts.

Religious men and women were almost as numerous as the secular clergy. St. Werburgh's was a large abbey in the thirteenth century, by English if not by continental standards, but by our period it had become difficult to maintain the number of its professed monks. It is not easy to account for this change, but it has many parallels elsewhere,[2] and doubtless reflects a real decline in the appeal of the monastic vocation. In 1377, the whole chapter, though perhaps not including novices, amounted to twenty,[3] and to twenty-seven in 1379,[4] as compared with forty about a century earlier.[5] The commissary of the provincial chapter, visiting the house in 1393, found the number of monks insufficient, and the abbot promised to make due amendment.[6] There were twenty-one monks in the house as late as 1538,[7] but only fourteen at the dissolution.[8]

The nunnery was always a much smaller house. There were thirteen nuns in the convent in 1381,[9] and fourteen, including the prioress and three novices, at the dissolution.[10] All the indications are that about

[1] This would include, of course, the chaplains employed by the monks and the nuns, the two chaplains of the Fraternity of St. George, and those of the Fraternity of St. Anne. There must also have been four or five chaplains in the hospitals of St. John, St. Giles, and St. Ursula, and others in the chapel in the castle and in the chapels of Boughton and Churton Heath. (The chapel referred to at Boughton was not, of course, the chapel of the leper hospital of St. Giles there. There was also, in the township, a chapel of ease of St. Oswald's parish. *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXX, p. 55 *et seq.*)

[2] Cf. the very interesting table of monastic population in Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, p. 21. The Black Death doubtless contributed to this process, but its precise significance in this connection is difficult to establish.

[3] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XLVI, p. 49.

[4] *Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 136.

[5] Moorman, *Church Life in England*, p. 402.

[6] *Pantin*, vol. II, p. 92.

[7] Harl. 2071, f. 47. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXII, p. 52.)

[8] *Burne*, p. 29. This total includes two novices.

[9] Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 211.

[10] *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. XV, p. 30.

fifteen or sixteen was an average figure for the fifteenth century, and it is unlikely that there were ever more than twenty nuns at St. Mary's at any time.

There were usually about thirty or forty friars in the three mendicant convents,[1] but it should be remembered that they did not confine their ministrations to the town in which they dwelt, but often engaged in evangelistic work over a wide area.

Though the city churches were surprisingly few in number, their value was small, and in most instances it was decreasing during this period. The richest benefice, in the fourteenth century, was probably the deanery of St. John's. In 1393, it was valued at "less than 200 marks" (£133 6*s*. 8*d*.), and it was augmented, in that year, by the appropriation to it of the church of Plemstall, which was said to be worth a further 50 marks (£33 6*s*. 8*d*.).[2] However, it suffered "no small loss" during the rebellion of Owen Glendower, and by 1412 [3] its value had fallen to "less than 100 marks". Unfortunately, these figures tell us little about the dean's personal income, which was probably never very much greater than the £36 16*s*. 2*d*. per annum recorded in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.[4] Ordinary prebends were valued at £20 per annum each in 1366, but it would appear that they were usually worth less than that to their incumbents, perhaps as little as half.[5] By 1436, however, they had fallen to about £4,[6] and by 1535 to £3 9*s*. 8*d*.[7] The

[1] At the dissolution there were seven grey friars (Bennett, "Grey Friars of Chester", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, vol. XXIV, p. 31), ten white friars (Bennett, "White Friars of Chester", *ibid.*, vol. XXXI, pt. I, p. 25), and only five Dominicans (Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 102). These figures are clearly lower than had been usual. It has been said that the latter convent numbered thirty-eight in the early years of its foundation (Hinnebusch, *Early English Friars Preachers*, p. 274), but the Carmelite convent of 1367, consisting of fourteen members (Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 14), was probably much more typical of the usual state of affairs in our period.

[2] *C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 533.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 270.

[4] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 204. £43 9*s*. 8*d*. gross, less the stipend of the perpetual vicar of Plemstall. The deanery, in 1393 and 1412, undoubtedly included certain revenues, which in 1535 were comprised in the common fund, and were always used, in fact, to pay the stipends of the vicars and the commons of residentiary canons. The decline in the value of the deanery is thus more apparent than real.

[5] *Reg. Stretton*, vol. II. Longedon's prebend, p. 216. Morton's prebend, p. 217, Gentil's, p. 220, and Grafton's, p. 221. But Bishop Northburg, after a visitation of the college in 1348, had decreed that the canons' incomes were to be limited to 16 marks (£10 13*s*. 4*d*.), and the surplus thus obtained from the common fund be applied to the repair of the fabric. It was then stated that few of the prebends greatly exceeded sixteen marks in annual value. (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 112.)

[6] Walter Heydok was then said (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 589) to receive an annual income of 8 marks (£6 6*s*. 8*d*.) from the simultaneous possession of a prebend and a vicar's stall, and the latter was then probably worth £3. In 1430, the third prebend of Holy Cross was valued at 6 marks. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 167.)

[7] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 204.

fifth and sixth prebends were worth a little more than the others. Their value in earlier times does not appear, but they were worth £10 3*s.* 0*d.* in 1535,[1] and £8 each in 1548.[2]

The value of these prebends may seem inconsiderable, but they were not smaller than most prebends in other collegiate churches,[3] and quite as valuable as many smaller cathedral prebends. There were, for example, in the cathedrals of Salisbury, Lincoln and Wells, besides many of much greater value, a number of prebends assessed at only four or five marks a year, while between five and ten marks was about the average value of the small manorial prebends of St. Paul's.[4] More important than the basic value of these prebends is the fact that the commons of a residentiary canon at St. John's were much less than those paid at the cathedral churches in which most of the Chester canons also held prebendal stalls.[5] They had little inducement to reside at St. John's beyond the minimum period required to qualify them for a share in the general revenues of the chapter.

In the early fourteenth century, the stipends of the vicars of St. John's were fixed at £2 [6] per annum. They were increased to £3 in 1346,[7] and to £4 in 1401.[8] The *Valor* gives the vicars' salaries as £4 16*s.* 4*d.* per annum, but, in reality, their incomes at that date amounted to something like £7 [9] per annum.

Information on the value of the other rectories and vicarages in the city is not so readily available. The rectory of St. Mary's, valued at £52 per annum in 1535, was then, as at the beginning of our period, the richest of the parish churches.[10]

According to the *Valor*, the next in value, though assessed at a much smaller figure, was the vicarage of St. Oswald, said to be worth £8 18*s.* 4*d.*[11]

[1] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 204. [2] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314.

[3] Cf. Thompson, " Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons ", *Archaeological Journal*, vol. LXXIV, p. 182. The prebends of Chester-le-Street were valued at 20 marks each in 1291 (*ibid.*, p. 170); those of the church of Westbury on Trym worth £2 each in the fifteenth century. (*Ibid.*, p. 166.)

[4] Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages*, p. 40.

[5] Resident canons at Chester were paid 2½*d.* per diem, for ordinary days, 3*d.* for every feast of nine lessons, 4*d.* for double feasts, the dean receiving double the commons of an ordinary canon. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379, Lich. Reg., vol. III, ff. 118, 134.) Thus a canon who was resident, all the year round, could not earn more than £4–£5 in commons. In 1353, a residentiary drew £5 per annum. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 228.) Commons at Lincoln, York and Lichfield in this period were at least 12*d.* per diem, with extra allowances of from 2*s.* to 10*s.* on double or principal feast days. (Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 43.)

[6] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379.

[7] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 118a. [8] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 484.

[9] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 203, and see below pages 56 and 106.

[10] Cf. Graham, " Taxation of Pope Nicholas ", *E.H.R.*, vol. XXIII, p. 434 *et seq.*

[11] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 208. The vicar enjoyed a share in the tithe of grain as well as small tithes, and possessed a glebe valued at 27*s.* per annum.

The rectory of Holy Trinity was then valued at £8 15*s.* 6*d.*,[1] and that of St. Peter, which appears to have declined very appreciably in the previous fifty years, at £6 13*s.* 4*d.*[2] It should be remembered, too, that the incumbents of St. Mary, St. Peter and Holy Trinity were each accustomed to pay the stipend of a parochial chaplain out of the fruits of his living, and it is not clear that allowance is here made for these charges. St. Olaf's is not noticed in the *Valor*, and, in 1542, this church was being served by a curate in charge.[3]

A more valuable living than most of the parish churches was the "petty canonry" of St. John's. The chantry of the Blessed Virgin was served by two priests, and the office of the senior cantarist, the petty canon, was classed as a full beneficium, presentations to which occur in the episcopal registers. This living was said, in 1435, not to exceed 12 marks,[4] which suggests that it was at that date worth a good deal more than an ordinary prebend. This was certainly the case in the sixteenth century. According to the *Valor*, the petty canon's share of the common fund was actually greater than that of the canons, and this, together with the territorial endowments of the chantry, brought his annual income up to £15 18*s.* 4*d.*[5] This benefice was thus the third most valuable in Chester, ranking only below the deanery of St. John's and the rectory of St. Mary's.

It will be evident that, with the exception of the two last named, all the Chester benefices were of very small value. They were, in fact, worth a good deal less than the majority of rural livings in the neighbourhood.[6]

In the sixteenth century, £5 appears to have been the normal stipend, both of priests serving at permanent chantries and guild altars,[7] and of

[1] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 208.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 207. Throughout the fifteenth century, Holy Trinity was regularly exempt from the payment of ecclesiastical tenths as being worth less than 12 marks, while such relief was never apparently accorded to the rector of St. Peter's. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 48; vol. XII, f. 129; vol. XIII, f. 193, etc.)

[3] List of assistant chaplains in *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. XXXIII, p. 1 *et seq.*

[4] *C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 539.

[5] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.

[6] The first figure in the following list is taken from the *Taxatio* (p. 248), and the second from the *Valor* as indicated. Hawarden, £13 6*s.* 8*d.*, £67; Christleton, £12, £41; Eccleston, £5 6*s.* 8*d.*, £15; Barrow, £6 13*s.* 4*d.*, £19; Thornton, £10 13*s.* 4*d.*, £24; Doddleston, £5 6*s.* 8*d.*, £8; Tarporley, £5, £20; Waverton, £6 13*s.* 4*d.*, £23 (vol. V, p. 207); Budworth, £24 13*s.* 4*d.*, £6 (*ibid.*, p. 211); Heswell, £5, £18; Woodchurch, £9 6*s.* 8*d.*, £25; Bebington, £8 13*s.* 4*d.*, £30; Wallasey £12, £11; West Kirby, £10 13*s.* 4*d.*, £28. (*Ibid.*, p. 213.)

[7] The stipend of a chaplain within the church of St. Michael consisted of rents from nine houses amounting to £4. (P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24.) In 1556, two chaplains of the Fraternity of St. George were drawing pensions of £4 each. (*Gastrell*, vol. I, p. 80 n.) In 1535, the two cantarists of the Thornton Chantry in

those who were engaged to celebrate for the soul of a particular individual for a relatively short term of years,[1] though examples occur of stipends of less than £2.[2] This figure was general throughout the country,[3] and had not been raised to meet the increased "cost of living" since the beginning of the previous century.[4] It is clear that it represented barely a living wage. In the reign of Henry VIII, an agricultural labourer, in regular employment, could earn about £4 a year, a skilled artisan £6 or £7.[5] As early as 1440, Archbishop Chichele considered 12 marks (£8) per annum as a bare living for a vicar.[6]

We should not then expect, on the basis of these figures, to find many distinguished or well-born priests serving the church in Chester. Again excepting St. Mary's, it would be true to say that, from at least the middle of our period, the incumbents of the city benefices can have enjoyed a standard of living scarcely higher than that of the bulk of their fellow citizens, while at the other end of the scale the poorer-paid chaplains were sunk in real poverty. The stipends annexed to the prebends in the collegiate church put residence out of the question, except for canons who had considerable private means, and some pluralism was obviously inevitable.

The bishop of Lichfield, of right, collated the deans and canons of St. John's; the perpetual vicars were appointed by the canons with the approval of the dean and chapter.[7] The proportion of canons

St. John's were paid £4 8*s*. 3*d*. (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.) At the dissolution, the issues of the Troutbeck chantry in St. Mary's on the Hill amounted to £5 6*s*. 8*d*. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, XXV, p. 85.) The curate of St. Bridget's took all the tithes and profits of the church, which were said to amount to £5. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, XXVI, p. 10.) The cantarist of the Blessed Virgin in the same church was paid £4 per annum. (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 393.)

[1] In 1518, Nicholas Deykin left £45 to "an honest priest & weldisposed to syng for me . . . V years". Alderman Wm. Rogerson decreed in his will (1519) that Sir Richard Rogerson should sing for his soul, for six years or more, at £4 6*s*. 8*d*. per annum. John Hawarden (1496) left £46 13*s*. 4*d*. to retain a priest for 10 years. In similar testamentary arrangements, Margaret Hawarden (1521) desired a priest to be paid £5 per annum, Elizabeth Hurleston (1528), £4 13*s*. 4*d*., Henry Raynford (1505), 6 marks, and Randle Brereton (1537), £5.

[2] E.g. a stipend within St. Mary's worth 23*s*. (P.R.O., Rentals & Surveys, 6/24); the "curate" of St. Martins, £2 13*s*. 4*d*. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXVI, p. 10.)

[3] In 1362, Archbishop Islip fixed the salaries of chantry chaplains at 5 marks, and those of parochial chaplains at six. In 1380, Archbishop Sudbury raised them to 7 and 8 marks respectively. It is clear from the earliest surviving Chester wills, those of Thomas del Frere (1384), John de Hatton (1397) and John Coly (1413), that even then £5 was the normal salary for a mass priest. The account of the collectors of the Fraternity of S. Anne, 5–6 Hen. IV (P.R.O., Sc. 11/890), includes £12 for wages of the (three ?) chaplains.

[4] *Valor*, *passim*.

[5] 6 Hen. VIII, cap. 3.

[6] Arrowsmith, *Prelude to the Reformation*, p. 35.

[7] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, p. 380.

nominated by the king or the pope was much smaller than in the chapter of Lichfield,[1] but in the fourteenth century, at least, it was not negligible.

In the period 1300–1430, six out of ninety-one of the canons of St. John's are known to have been presented by the king.[2] Three were presented by the prince of Wales, twelve were provided by the pope, while at least twenty-seven were collated by the bishop.[3]

The king's influence was greater than the simple figures disclose, the pope's not so great. It should be noticed that seven of the twelve provisions were merely to canonries with expectation of a prebend, expectations of which (so far as the writer has been able to trace them) few were realized.[4] Again, in probably the majority of instances, the pope's power to make provisions was exercised at the recommendation of the king himself, or that of some other English magnate.[5] The king's power to present, on the other hand, was almost invariably used to advance clerks who had earned their reward in the royal service. Four of the king's six presentees were royal clerks,[6] and, in all probability, he was also indirectly responsible for the appointment of the four royal clerks provided by the pope,[7] and the six[8] royal clerks collated by the bishop. The prince of Wales presented two of his own clerks,[9] and obtained the provision of a third.[10] In other words, we have found twenty-one cases in which the bishop, the nominal patron, made what appears to have been a free collation, as against twenty more or less direct nominations by the crown and only another seven nominations by the papacy. The same story could be told of the deanery of St. John's. Although only one dean is known to have been presented by the king,[11]

[1] A. H. Thompson, "Notes on Churches of Secular Canons", *Archaeological Journal*, vol. LXXIV, p. 182.

[2] This includes two canons, Gaudeby and Norton, presented by the king in 1379, in virtue of a concession to him, by the pope, of the right to present two canons to every cathedral and collegiate chapter in England, another example of the papacy and the crown working together in the interests of the latter.

[3] Twenty-one of the canons seem to have entered the chapter by means of exchange, and there are twenty-two instances in which we have no knowledge of how the prebend in question was obtained.

[4] Richard de Cestria (1317) and John de Swinley (1361) are the only canons who can be certainly said to have gained possession of their reserved prebends.

[5] E.g. William de Esinden (1358) provided at the request of Sir Arnold de Lebreto, and John de Langholm (1355) provided at the request of the Lady of Lidell.

[6] Gaudeby (1379), Norton (1379), Lincoln (1385), Coningeston (1398).

[7] Cestria (1317), Hasheby (1333), Wetfield (1350), Swinley (1361); Swinley and Hasheby are said to have been provided at the request of the king, and Wetfield at the request of the English ambassador to the curia, in whose service he was at the time of his provision.

[8] Hengham (1303), Hothum (1311), Lustshull (1316), Walsham (1361), Hatton (1393), Feriby (1394).

[9] Stokes (1360), Assheton (1363).

[10] Andrew Gerard (1363).

[11] Stephen de Kynardesley in 1323.

eight of the fifteen fourteenth-century deans, including the sole papal provide,[1] were probably " civil servants ".[2] When the bishop was free to make his own choice, he, too, seems often to have regarded the prebendal stalls of the collegiate church as providing a source of additional pocket money for his relatives, his friends and his clerks.

While a large minority of the canons were admitted as a result of exchange from prebends elsewhere,[3] the interests of the king and the bishop are clearly reflected in the composition of the fourteenth-century chapter. Out of a total of one hundred and five known deans and canons admitted between 1300 and 1431, thirty-five, at least, were civil servants,[4] and this number included many of the highest rank.

Ralph de Hengham (1303) [5] was probably the chief justice of that name. John de Hothum (1311) was well known as an adherent of Edward II and subsequently bishop of Ely.[6] Richard de Lustshull (1316) was one of the most prominent clerks of the chamber, 1314–19, and supervisor of chamber lands, 1315–21. Thomas de Clopton (dean, 1325) was sometime keeper of the wardrobe, and Alan de Stokes (1360) of the great wardrobe. The latter and Alexander de Dalby (dean, 1355) were prominent in the administration of Gascony. Richard de Cestria (1317), John de Newenham (1361), and John Lincoln of Grimsby (1385) were exchequer clerks. Thomas Feriby (1394) was later a baron of the exchequer. Hugh de Gaudeby (1379) and Henry Malpas (1396) were chancery clerks, while William Lochard (1403) and Henry Drayton (1413) are described as clerks of the royal chapel. Ralph de Hatton (1393) had been keeper of the privy wardrobe. Lincoln was Richard II's secretary, 1395–9. Walter Shiryngton (dean, 1431) was successively clerk of the signet, and chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. William de Byrcheles (dean, 1293), John de Wodehouse (dean, 1370) and Thomas Walton (1410) were all chamberlains of Chester and North Wales. One member of the chapter was in the service of John, duke of Bedford,[7]

[1] Alexander de Dalby (1355), who almost certainly owed his provision to the patronage of the Black Prince.

[2] Byrcheles, Kynardesley, Clopton, Dalby, Wodehouse, John Leyot, Shiryngton and Thrikyngham. By " fourteenth century " the writer here refers to the period 1300–1430.

[3] See page 16, note 3.

[4] We include in this category clerks in the service of the queen or the prince of Wales, as the members of these lesser royal households were normally recruited from among the king's clerks.

[5] Where dates are given in brackets in this chapter, they refer to the acquisition or earliest known possession of the benefice in question, and have been inserted to facilitate reference to the biographical material in the appendix.

[6] During the period in which he held this prebend, he was successively employed as escheator beyond Trent, chancellor of the exchequer, and ambassador to France.

[7] Richard Leyot (dean, 1423) was the duke's chancellor.

two in that of different queens,[1] and several more in that of lesser lay magnates.[2] It is also clear that during the lifetime of the Black Prince the chapter usually included a number of clerks who had done him loyal service in Chester or Gascony.[3]

Against this group of canons who had risen to eminence in the service of the state, we may set another group who had made their professional careers in the administration of the church, though of course these two groups were not mutually exclusive. Four of our canons held, at one time or another, the office of archdeacon of Chester ;[4] one was the archdeacon's official.[5] Eight more were sometime archdeacons of other archdeaconries within the diocese of Lichfield.[6] Two were chancellors of the bishop of Lichfield,[7] two precentors of Lichfield,[8] three were vicars general of that diocese,[9] while thirteen more held similar offices in other cathedral churches.[10]

As these facts suggest, there was in the fourteenth century, as indeed throughout our period, a considerable measure of identity between the chapters of St. John's and of Lichfield cathedral. In this century, forty-one of our canons held prebends in the cathedral at some point in their careers, and about half of these were simultaneously members of both chapters. Exchanges of prebends between members of the two chapters were extremely common. This relationship was strengthened,

[1] Hugh de Thrikyngham (dean, 1354) was in the service of Queen Isabella, and William de Norton, nominated to a prebend by the king in 1379, was almoner to Queen Anne. Hugh de Segrave was clerk to Queen Philippa, but he probably never obtained possession of the prebend to which he was presented by the king in 1360.

[2] E.g. John de Langholm (1355), chaplain to the lady of Liddell, and William de Moreton (1394), treasurer to the countess of Warwick.

[3] John Leyot the younger (1421) was also a clerk of the then prince of Wales.

[4] John de Marcell (1308), Wm. de Navesby (1363), William de Newhagh (1386), Thomas Hill (1424).

[5] John de Cravene (1344). John de Assheton (1363) in 1347 and 8 performed the office of the archdeacon of Chester, that office being in sequestration to the bishop.

[6] J. de Hasheby (1333) archd. Derby ; Appletre (dean, 1334) archd. Stafford ; J. Sulgrave (1338) archd. Stafford ; H. Marsh (1339) archd. Derby and Coventry ; J. Marsh (dean, 1339) archd. Stafford and Derby ; Burmyngham (dean, 1353) archd. Coventry and Stafford ; Boule (1356) archd. Coventry. Gregory Newport (1424) archd. Salop.

[7] Chilterne (1350), Depyng (1354).

[8] Newhagh (1386), Wolveden (1404), later dean of Lichfield.

[9] Burmyngham (dean 1353), Newhagh, Coningeston (1398).

[10] Hengham, chancellor of Exeter, archd. of Worcester; Richard de Cestria (1317), chancellor of the archbishop of York ; Robert de Walsham (1361), confessor to the Black Prince, precentor of Salisbury, archd. of Llandaff ; Stokes (1360), dean of St. Asaph ; Newenham (1361), provost of Wells ; John Lincoln (1385), archd. Sudbury and Huntingdon ; Thomas Feriby (1394), archd. Ely ; Thomas Hanley (1394), chancellor of Hereford ; Lochard (1403), precentor of Hereford ; Wolveden (1404), archd. Norwich and treasurer of York ; T. Heppeden (1404), chancellor of the bishop of Durham ; J. Sudbury (1411), registrar of the bishop of London ; Richard Leyot (dean, 1423), dean of St. Asaph and later of Salisbury.

from time to time, by the bonds of family interest. Bishop Roger de Northburg was the head of a well-known administrative family, and, during his episcopacy, something like a family clique grew up in the chapter of St. John's. Roger de Northburg (1338), Nicholas de Northburg (dean, 1329), Hugh Marsh (de Marisco 1339), John Marsh (dean, 1339), Thomas de Clopton (dean, 1325) and John de Sulgrave (1338) were all kinsmen or close associates of the bishop, while most of them, and other members of the same enterprising clan, also occupied prebendal stalls in the cathedral.

External, that is to say royal and papal, influence on appointments to the chapter was not so great in the latter half of our period. There were political reasons for the very large number of papal provisions to English benefices during the rule of Isabella and Mortimer, and in the early years of Edward III's reign.[1] This period saw the highest point of papal control over English livings, and it was then that most of the local examples of the practice, never very numerous, occurred.[2] There seems to have been a marked decline in the number of papal provisions after 1400.[3] The last example relating to Chester is found in 1406. The obvious explanation of this decline would be the operation of the several statutes of provisors, in spite of contemporary statements that these statutes had remained largely ineffective.

There is only one known example, after 1430, of presentation by the king to a prebend in St. John's.[4] After that date, only four members of the chapter appear to have been in royal service.[5] The steep decline in the value of the prebends, which seems first to have become serious as a result of Glendower's rebellion, is reflected by notable changes in the character of the chapter, observable after about 1430. We still find, after that date, some canons who rose to be figures of national importance—men like William Dudley (1454), the future bishop of Durham, Hugh Oldham (dean, 1493), the future bishop of Exeter and founder of Manchester Grammar School, and David Poole (1538), the future bishop of Peterborough—and a rather larger number who held important ecclesiastical office. John Bolde (ante 1443) was a member of the familia of Archbishop Chichele for many years. John Sothewell (1442) was almoner and " commensal member of the household " of the archbishop of York. John Whelpdale (1453) was receiver-general to

[1] Deeley, " Papal Provisions and Royal Rights of Patronage in the Early Fourteenth Century ", *E.H.R.*, vol. XLIII, p. 498 *et seq.*

[2] There are only three local examples later than 1361. Four of the six direct provisions to prebends (as opposed to expectancies) occurred between 1328 and 1355.

[3] Driver, " The Papacy and the Diocese of Hereford, 1307–77 ", *The Church Quarterly Review*, vol. CXLV. Waugh, " The Great Statute of Praemunire ", *E.H.R.*, vol. XXXVII.

[4] That of Thomas Ridley in May, 1496.

[5] Bolde, Dudley, Oldham and Manwaringe.

the bishop of Carlisle.[1] Clerks associated with the administration of the diocese of Lichfield, though not perhaps so numerous as formerly, continued to constitute an important group in the chapter. Of our deans and canons in this later period, twenty-four were sometime canons of Lichfield, and this number includes seven vicars general of the diocese,[2] one dean of Lichfield,[3] two treasurers,[4] one precentor,[5] and three custodians of spiritualities during vacancies of the see.[6] While most of the later deans stood close to the bishop,[7] and one of them, Geoffrey Blythe (1531), was the nephew of the bishop who collated him, the later canons seem, as a body, to have been less distinguished and influential than their predecessors. Out of a total of one hundred and five fourteenth-century deans and canons, about thirty can be said to have held high office in church or state at some point in their careers, while out of a total of sixty-seven for the period after 1430, only about fifteen fall into this category. The later chapter was more provincial than in earlier times. The canons were more often local men, more often in holy orders, more often, it would seem, genuine priests as opposed to clerical careerists.

The abbot and convent of St. Werburgh's met with less outside interference than did the bishop in the exercise of their rights of patronage. St. Mary's was the only desirable "plum" among the city churches in the convent's gift. From the convenient circumstances of its comparative wealth and its proximity to the castle, the seat of the palatinate government, it had come to be regarded in the fourteenth century as a fitting reward for services rendered by the officials of that government. In the first half of that century, it was held successively by three such officials, one of whom was Richard de Bury, the famous scholar, at that time chamberlain of Chester and North Wales.

The magnates of the county, whose twelfth-century ancestors had

[1] To these we might add Bromezerde (1451), chaplain to the archbishop of York, Warderop (1500), treasurer of Hereford, and Dalyson (1515), sometime precentor of Lincoln.

[2] Thomas Heywode (dean 1438), George Radclyf (1453), Owen Lloyd (1458), Thomas Reynolds (1465), Thomas Milly (dean 1471), Ralph Cantrell (1483; dean 1505), David Pole (1538).

[3] Heywode.

[4] Radclyf and Geoffrey Blythe (dean, 1531).

[5] Blythe.

[6] Roger Walle (1438), who was archdeacon of Coventry for many years, was appointed custodian of the see on the death of Bishop Reginald Boulers in 1459, while David Pole and Richard Strete (1535, dean, 1541) held similar office in 1531 on the death of Bishop Blythe. In 1535, Strete was receiver general to the bishop and to the dean and chapter of Lichfield. Both he and Walle served as proctors in convocation of the clergy of the diocese.

[7] Thomas Heywode (1438), dean of Lichfield; Thos. Milly (1471), the bishop's registrar; Talbot (1489), archd. of Chester; Walker (1542), steward to the bishop of Lichfield. See also notes 2 and 6 above.

been so generous in endowing the abbey with lands and churches, felt that they had retained a moral right to influence the presentations to churches in its gift. The abbots of Chester, well aware of the city's increasing animus against them, seem to have pursued with some success a policy of good neighbourly relations with the gentlemen of the county.[1] It is unlikely, therefore, that they offered much resistance to pressure from the fathers of younger sons, but as far as the city livings were concerned, this pressure was strongly applied only in the case of St. Mary's.

Sometimes the abbey formally alienated the next presentation to a living to one of the local magnates,[2] and, as we might expect, alienations of this character grew more numerous in the years immediately preceeding the dissolution.[3] There is no record of any papal provisions to the abbey's churches. Four presentations were made by the bishop " pro lapsu ",[4] one by the archbishop of Canterbury and one by the king. There are three instances of the abbot using his authority for the benefit of his kinsmen, but it is worthy of remark that this was only done, so far as we know, by Abbots Seynesbury and Birchenshaw, who were clearly the most unsatisfactory abbots of our period, and who were both ultimately deposed for their ill-conduct in office.

Two livings were, throughout our period, in lay patronage. The well-endowed petty canonry in St. John's was founded by a member of the Orreby family,[5] and the advowson of this living was said to be annexed

[1] Thus, when Abbot Oldham was obliged to enter into a recognizance to keep the peace to the mayor in 1479, his joint sureties were William Brereton, kt., Peter Dutton, Hugh Davenport of Henbury, Hugh Donne, John Donne, kt., William Venables of Kinderton, Thomas Crewe and Thomas Croxton. (C.R.R., 19 & 20 Ed. IV. m. 7 d. (5), in Appendix II to *The Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 780.)

[2] William Troutbeck, esquire, presented to St. Mary's in 1430, by virtue of a grant by the abbot and convent. This practice led to frequent disputes, like that which occurred in 1388 between John Squier, the rector nominated by the convent, and Altcar, presented by a third party (the chamberlain of Chester, John de Brunham), who claimed the right to do so by virtue of such a grant. In 16 R. II, there was an enquiry into allegations that the convent had alienated all its advowson rights in the city, without the assent of the earl, to one John de Delves, who was, incidentally, another prominent officer in the administration of the palatinate. (Harl. 1994, f. 262.) In 1430, Troutbeck's right to present was challenged by Sir William de Athurston who claimed that a prior grant had been made to him.

[3] e.g. in May, 1541, Randle Cotgreve was presented to the rectory of St. Peter by Roger Brereton, esq., William Cotgreve, junior, of Christleton and Nicholas Newbold of Doddleston, yeoman, patrons by grant of the abbot and convent of the late dissolved monastery. By a similar grant, the patronage of St. Mary's was exercised, in Nov., 1542, by Ottiwell Worseley, gent., who had been retained by the abbey as auditor. (*Valor*, V, p. 205.)

[4] In one of these, the bishop's nominee (Crissenale, St. Peter's, 1402) probably never gained possession.

[5] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 152.

to the manor of Fulk Stapleford.[1] The advowson passed with this manor, after the death of Sir John de Orreby, to his daughter Joan, wife of Sir John Roos, to their daughter Mary, and ultimately, through the female line, to the influential local family of the Brereton of Brereton.[2] A number of presentations to the chantry in the late fourteenth century were made by the prince of Wales, during the minority of Joan de Orreby.

In the fourteenth century, the advowson of Holy Trinity was in the hands of the family of Montalt, which provided the hereditary stewards of Chester, one of whose members was probably the founder of this church.[3] In 1335, it was transferred to Queen Isabella, for the period of her life, in exchange for certain other properties.[4] The Montalt family being extinguished, it was then granted by the king, together with their other possessions in Chester and North Wales, to William de Montague, earl of Salisbury.[5] The latter's successor was attainted in 1401, and the property was then regranted to Sir John Stanley of Lathom, who owned, as the Montalts had done, considerable property in the neighbourhood of the church, and in whose family it has since remained.[6]

SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE CHESTER CLERGY

It has been frequently remarked by the historians of England in the later middle ages, that the structure of classes was less rigid, less clearly defined, than in contemporary continental society. It was not difficult, in England, for the wealthy merchant to acquire land and with it the imputation of gentle birth, nor was it disgraceful for the impoverished gentleman to venture into trade. The son of the poorest serf might sit, as a bishop, in the High Court of Parliament. These generalizations could be amply demonstrated from the circumstances of our locality. The wealthy merchant families of Chester in the late fifteenth and early

[1] According to an inquisition held in the church, May, 1380. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 184.)

[2] For details of the descent see *Ormerod*, vol. II, pp. 802 and 803.

[3] Farrell, *Holy Trinity*, p. 1.

[4] *Cal. Pat., 1334–8*, p. 129. Isabella presented John de Purston in 1349.

[5] *Complete Peerage*, vol. IX, p. 17. Robert de Montalt d.s.p. 26 Dec., 1329. After Isabella's death the advowson passed into the hands of the Black Prince. In July, 1360, he made an order for it to be delivered to William de Montecute, as it pertained to him of right (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 390), but the same order was repeated in the following June. (*Ibid.*, p. 419.) The earl of Salisbury occurs as patron in 1369, 1378, 1384 and 1396. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 331.)

[6] Farrell, *loc. cit.*, Elizabeth, countess of Salisbury (widow of William de Montague), presented in 1402. In 1405, she disputed the presentation of William de Newhagh by Sir John Stanley, and she presented again in May, 1412. All presentations after that date were made by the Stanley family. (*Ormerod, loc. cit.*)

sixteenth centuries, the Hawardens, the Southworths, the Davenports, the Duttons, the Stanleys, the Hurltons, might indeed have constituted something like a caste, linked together as they were by the most complex bonds of relationship and common interest, but, as their names alone are sufficient to indicate, it was not a closed caste vis-à-vis the lesser gentry of the county. Throughout our period, it is not difficult to find examples of bourgeois families like the Doncasters in the fourteenth century, and the Smiths [1] in the sixteenth, emerging as substantial landowners in the neighbourhood, while ancient families, like the Snedes of Bradwell and Willaston and the Duttons of Hatton, provided Chester with many of its leading citizens.

When this has been said, however, the fact remains that we have to do with a semi-feudal society in which distinctions of birth and wealth could be of decisive importance in human relationships. Questions about the social origins of the clergy must therefore be asked—the degree of fluidity noticed makes them difficult to answer.

Our certain knowledge of the social origins of the collegiate clergy of St. John's leaves much room for conjecture. Of some two-thirds of the canons nothing definite is known on this head. Usually, when there is evidence of birth, the prebendaries appear as members of the knightly class,[2] the class to which the majority of the royal clerks probably belonged.[3] Among these canons of knightly origin, we may note with particular interest those who sprang from the leading families of the county palatine. This group formed only a small minority, but members of it are to be met with throughout our period. Randle Torald (dean, 1309) came from the family of the manorial lords of Great Mollington. Henry Malpas (1396) was perhaps related to the family of Hampton and Bickley, Ralph Cantrell (dean, 1505–31) to that of the Chauntrells of Bache Hall. Ralph Pole (1535) was lord of the manor of Poole, and David Pole who succeeded to his prebend was obviously a close kinsman. Ralph Snede (1543) and Thomas Snede (1548) were equally certainly kinsmen of the Snedes of Willaston. Of nine more

[1] Bennett, " The Hospital and Chantry of St. Ursula ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXII, pt. II, p. 99.

[2] William de Bernak (1328) was probably related to William Bernak of Burgh, Lincolnshire. Nicholas Swynnerton (1350) was a kinsman of Sir Robert Swynnerton of Swinnerton, Staffordshire. Thomas Heppeden (1404) was " of knightly race ". George Radclyf (1453) was " the son of a knight ". William Dudley (1454) was a younger, probably third, son of John Sutton de Dudley, Baron Dudley. William Lochard (1403) was " of great and noble race ". Thomas Heywode (dean, 1438) was " of a race of barons ". Christopher Talbot (dean, 1489) was a younger son of John, Earl of Shrewsbury.

[3] e.g. Randle de Hengham (1303), the son of Sir Andrew de Hengham of Hingham, Norfolk ; John de Hothum (1311), " the younger son of a good Yorkshire family " ; Thomas (1394) and Richard (1418) Feriby, members of another Yorkshire family, which was long prominent in the royal administration.

canons, we can say at least that they have names which suggest kinship with the gentry of Cheshire.[1]

In another group, rather lower perhaps in social origin, we observe those canons who owed their advancement in the church to their relationship with more prominent ecclesiastics. It included, beside the Northburg connection and Geoffrey Blythe, William de Newerk (1328), the kinsman of a former archbishop of York, whose chaplain he had once been, and William de Navesby (1363) who was a nephew of Bishop Ginwell of Lincoln.

Although the chapter seems to have come, from time to time, into the control of a clique like that of the Northburgs, there is no trace at Chester, except perhaps in the very last years of the history of the collegiate church, of that tendency for the prebendal stalls to become the monopoly of an exclusive circle of notable families, which was typical of the development of similar foundations in some other countries.[2] Throughout our period, clerics of more humble origin could and did obtain prebends here, alongside canons of gentle birth. There were, for example, a number of representatives of the leading city families.[3] Others, again, represented the smaller landholders of the district.[4] A few others, perhaps, were purely self-made men. William de Meer, probably a local man, seems to have been an ordinary " poor parson ", who held in succession several local vicarages, and a vicar's stall in the collegiate church itself, before he obtained his prebend in 1359, at the presentation of the prince of Wales. Walter Heydok, licensed, about

[1] Dutton, Massy, Ashton, Hatton, Manwaringe, two Suttons and two Moretons. There is, of course, the strong probability that in some of these cases, the canons were only related, very distantly, to the important families whose names they bore. There were many Chester people named Massy or Dutton who were certainly not considered gentlemen. Other canons have local names (Malpas, Hanley, Cestria, Waverton) which give no indication of social origins.

[2] The cathedral chapter at Lyons laid down that all its canons must have at least four strains of nobility in their blood. The chapter of Köln, and of other cathedral and collegiate churches in the Rhineland, consisted almost exclusively of ecclesiastics belonging to local noble families. (Edwards, *English Secular Cathedrals*, p. 34.)

[3] Dalby (dean, 1355) was probably related to one of the mayors. John Leyot (dean, 1395), Richard Leyot, perhaps his son, who succeeded him, and another John Leyot, who held a prebend in the period of his deanery, belonged to one such family, originally of yeoman stock in South Lancashire. William Southworth (1489) was the son of one mayor of Chester, John Southworth, and the brother-in-law of another, Ralph Davenport.

[4] Simon Gentil (1366) derived from yeoman stock in the Lancaster area. John Bolde (1443) was, in all likelihood, a member of a family which held lands in Wallasey and Bebington in the fifteenth century, several of whose members were prominent in the administration of the palatinate. Roger Asser (dean, 1444) and William Asser (1455) were almost certainly related to the two John Assers, father and son, who successively held the appointments of master mason of the castles of Chester and Flint and surveyor of the works of the city walls.

1430, to hold a prebend together with a vicar's stall in St. John's, was, no doubt, of similar standing. Four of the canons were of illegitimate birth,[1] probably the sons of priests. Richard Walker, the last dean of the college, is said to have been the son of an artisan in Lichfield, who first attracted the attention of Bishop Roland Lee by his precocious academic abilities.

It is when we turn from the canons of St. John's to the remainder of the secular clergy that the difficulties of our task become most marked. These clerics, the rectors and vicars of the parish churches, played a more significant part in the religious life of the city than the more or less non-resident canons, but reliable evidence of their careers and origins is the more difficult to come by, precisely because most of them were priests rather than administrators. A considerable number of them were not inferior in birth or education to the canons themselves. We know only of two, Henry Hey (rector, St. Peter's, 1431) and James Stanley (rector, St. Mary's, 1458, St. Peter's, 1464), who sprang from noble houses, but many representatives of gentle landed families are to be found among them. As we should expect, this is especially true of the rectors of St. Mary's whose number include, besides Stanley, Richard de Bury,[2] Alan de Retford (1327), a clerk in the household of Queen Isabella, Walter de Chilterne (1361), a prebendary of St. John's and chancellor of the bishop of Lichfield, Richard Pensell (1430), a kinsman of William Troutbeck, esq., who presented him, John Veysy (1499), the son of William Harmon of More Hall, Sutton Coldfield, John Davenport (1528), a connection of the influential Cheshire family of that name, and John Brereton (1534), the third son of Sir Randle Brereton of Shocklach.[3] The petty canonry in St. John's having passed into the patronage of the Breretons of Brereton, it is not surprising to discover two cadets of this family among the later cantarists. Indeed, in the last sixty years of our period, at least, the cantarist was always the social equal of the canons.

Members of the city's ruling families are found, in every period, in every type of living. Adam de Doncaster, who was presented by Sir John de Orreby to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin in 1307, was the brother of William de Doncaster, who was mayor,[4] 1316–19, and Ranulf de Scolehall, who was instituted to the same chantry in 1380, was likewise connected with a prominent city family. Alexander le Bel (rector, Holy Trinity, 1318) was a kinsman of John Arneway, who was mayor

[1] Wetfield (1350), R. Leyot (dean, 1423) specifically said to have been the son of a priest, Worseley (1455), Orell (1457).

[2] He was the son of a knight, Sir Richard Aungerville. (*D.N.B.*)

[3] To these may be added Swynnerton (Holy Trinity, 1325), Bredon (St. Peter's, 1350), Henry Medwall (sacristan of St. John's ante 1492) who was a connection of the Stanleys of Hooton.

[4] There is a list of mayors and sheriffs in *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 207 *et seq.*

of Chester, 1268–78; and to these we might add John Leyot (rector, St. Peter's, 1402), Roger Asser (rector, St. Peter's, 1444, St. Mary's, 1464), Henry Rayneforde (rector, Holy Trinity, 1482, vicar, St. Oswald, 1493), Baxter (rector, St. Peter's, 1511) and Cotgreve (rector, St. Peter's, 1541).

In a few instances, there are positive grounds for believing a rector to be a man of humble birth,[1] but too little is known of the majority to place them in any social category. It is clear from the large number of local names—Chester, Newton, Bebington, Capenhurst, Wylaston and the like—that very many, perhaps the majority, were born and speut most of their lives in Cheshire. We may hazard the guess, it can be little more, that they were the sons of lesser freeholders in the county or of the more prosperous craftsmen and small merchants in the city. Of the majority of the vicars of St. John's, the bare names alone have come down to us. Some, like William Wall (1535), may have belonged to prosperous local families, but more typical were Thomas Latwis (1548), who was related to a barker in the city, Robert Boyer (1535), whose only known kinsman was a shoemaker, and Thomas Wemme (*c.* 1430), whose father before him had been a vicar at the collegiate church.

It is among the unbeneficed clergy that we find most evidence relating to such working-class priests. Something has already been said of the large numbers of parochial chaplains, mass priests and other unbeneficed clerks, who managed to earn a subsistence wage in the city. Among these, Cheshire names—Massey, Brereton, Bennett, Bostok, Ledsham, and Egerton—were very common. Twenty examples have been found, all but one of them from the last sixty years of our period, of chaplains who were clearly the sons of Chester citizens. Their kinsmen include tailors, barkers, glovers and carpenters, but they also include John Harper, mercer, who was one of the sheriffs in 1508, William Rogerson, mayor in 1510, and Ralph Davenport, who was three times mayor.[2] It is clear that only the very broadest generalizations about class distinctions in the church can have any measure of validity.

Among the ladies of St. Mary's, birth counted for a good deal more. There were many reasons why the medieval nunnery tended to become a depository for aristocratic spinsters. For one thing, it was only unmarried women of gentle birth who were debarred by the conventions of the time from earning a living by their own exertions in the wider world. For another, a poor nunnery—and St. Mary's was always desperately poor—was financially dependent upon its ability to attract

[1] E.g. William Pellyn (rector, St. Peter's, ante 1501), probably related to William and Henry Pillyn, cappers, who were indicted, 13 Hen. VII, as " foreigners ", for practising their trade within the liberties of the city.

John Middleton (Holy Trinity, 1378), described as " a poor clerk ".

[2] Chester Mayor's Books, *passim.*

those women who could bring with them a considerable dowry. Naturally, the great lady, even when she had forsaken the world, expected to be treated with the consideration that her birth demanded, and to exercise similar authority over those about her to that which she had always been accustomed to use.

A poorly endowed "provincial" nunnery, like St. Mary's, must always have been less aristocratic in composition than the more fashionable houses, and the names of the ordinary sisters which have come down to us from the latter years of the nunnery's history, although they include a Dutton, a Savage and a Chantrell, show that many of them were not gentlewomen. It is not surprising, even so, to find that out of the seventeen prioresses who ruled St. Mary's between 1300 and the dissolution, eight at least belonged to the leading families of the county. All the others were probably, like Alice Doncaster and Alice Leyot, derived from the wealthiest ranks of the middle class. While it is true that an aristocratic prioress is the rule before 1400 and the exception afterwards, it should be noted that the last prioress was Elizabeth Grosvenor, a sister of Sir Thomas Grosvenor of Eaton.[1]

The monks of St. Werburgh's seem to have been, for the most part, of undistinguished birth, but there was a Venables, "of noble race", there in 1422, and a Stanley in 1538. It is usually said that the majority of the friars were derived from the lower middle classes,[2] but, unfortunately, this statement can be neither modified nor illustrated by reliable information about the members of the three Chester convents.[3]

THE EDUCATION OF THE CLERGY

Of even more importance, perhaps, than the social origins of the clergy, were their educational attainments. No aspect of pre-Reformation religious life has been obscured more than this in the smoke and heat of theological controversy. On the one side, we hear much of illiterate priests who could not even recite the Lord's Prayer in English, and on the other, of those who assumed the cure of souls only after seven years of theological study at a university. No doubt both types are to be found by those who look for them.

[1] Jacka (p. 3). "That any nun was ever drawn from a class below the rich bourgeoisie is extremely doubtful."

[2] e.g. Fueter, *Religion und Kirche in England*, p. 27.

[3] The writer has notice of two Chester friars who were perhaps of gentle birth. Brother William de Macclesfield, an illustrious member of the Dominican convent in the second half of the thirteenth century, is said to have been "born of a good family, seated at Macclesfield". (Palmer, "The Black Friars of Chester", *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 98.) Richard de Dounes, prior of the Carmelites in 1386, was probably a member of the Utkinton family. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXVII, p. 45.)

On this head, our evidence with regard to local conditions is less disappointing than it is on questions of birth. Such as it is, it can hardly be reconciled with the assertion of either of these extreme points of view. For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we can usually say with confidence whether or not a beneficed clerk was a university graduate. More doubts must remain with regard to the fourteenth-century clergy, for in the records of that time the designation of university graduates was less formal and invariable.

It is clear that a university education was the rule rather than the exception for the deans and canons of St. John's.[1] It is certainly no exaggeration to say that two-thirds of the canons had been to a university. As might be expected, relatively few of the incumbents of the other city churches had enjoyed the same educational advantages. We know for certain of only four graduates among the twenty rectors of St. Peter's, of eight out of the twenty rectors of St. Mary's on the Hill, of five out of twenty-five rectors of Holy Trinity. To these, we may add only four rectors of St. Olaf, only three vicars of St. Oswald's, two petty canons. Few of the vicars of St. John's were graduates (we know only of four) and evidence of superior education is not to be found at all among the unbeneficed chaplains and mass-priests.

A result of some significance emerges from a comparison of the evidence of higher education, with that noticed above of gentle birth. Almost all the university men among the canons sprang from the gentry or the wealthy middle class. It was, of course, possible for the sons of artisans or peasants, men like Walter Heydok and Richard Walker, to study at a university and achieve more or less great advancement in the church, but such men appear to have been, at all times, in a small minority in this chapter.

At the lower level of the ordinary parochial clergy, it is not uncommon to find priests of such relatively mean origin in possession of a degree,[2] but most of the graduate parsons came from the middle-class families of the neighbourhood. On the face of it, our evidence would suggest that it was much more common to find a graduate priest holding the care of souls in an ordinary parish church in the last hundred years of

[1] Out of the fifteen deans of the college after 1395 there are only two who were not certainly graduates ; of those before that date at least half possessed university degrees. Of the seventy-six ordinary canons for the period 1400–1547, we find thirty-nine who were clearly graduates, and less than half that number who were probably not. (From their being called dominus or from some other circumstance.) We may be sure that graduates were at least as numerous in the fourteenth-century chapter, which, as we have seen, was a more distinguished body.

[2] Thomas Wemme, a graduate who was at one time a vicar of St. John's and subsequently held the rectory of St. Olaf (1436) together with the chantry of the Blessed Virgin, was the son of a priest. John de Cristleton (vicar, St. John's, 1352), Richard de Penkerych (rector, Holy Trinity, 1369), James Straitbarell (rector, St. Mary, 1506), and John Godefelowe (vicar, St. Oswald, 1476).

this period than in earlier times, and that the number was steadily increasing.[1]

Whether this trend, if it took place, represented real progress in the intellectual life of the church in Chester, is another matter.[2] Here, we have only one piece of tangible evidence which throws light on the essential problem—the will of Henry Rayneforde. This man was a member of a prosperous Chester family, probably the son, or grandson, of a former mayor. In 1482, he was presented by Lord Stanley to the rectory of Holy Trinity. In 1490, he occurs as *bachelor of decrees*, that is to say of canon law, and, in the following year, he obtained a licence to absent himself from his rectory to study theology or law. After his return to Chester, in 1493, he held the vicarage of St. Oswald, and the rectory of a moiety of Malpas, in addition to Holy Trinity. It is clear from the numerous personal bequests in his will, that he was a man of considerable substance, and he was the proud possessor of what he appears to have regarded as an extensive and valuable library. His testamentary arrangements for its disposal provide very suggestive evidence of the intellectual interests of the better-educated clergy in the opening years of the sixteenth century. It included " my book of *Summa Confessorum* ", " my book called *Regimen Sanitatis* " and the *Constitutions Legatyne* " in a little book both ", " the *Constitutions Provincial* in a little book ", *Sermones Discipuli*, *Vitas Patrum* [*sic*], " my missal ", and a " portuouse of print ". In short, it consisted of legal manuals and typically medieval works of devotion. Rayneforde mentions the fact that he had been to Rome, presumably on pilgrimage, but the Renaissance spirit had not entered his library. Nor does it appear that any of his books, except the " portuouse ", were printed ones.[3]

Although Rayneforde's licence to study mentions theology, it is clear that he had chosen to specialize in the field of law. In this he was typical of his age. About ninety per cent [4] of the graduates we have

[1] Twelve out of twenty-eight rectors between 1460 and 1540 were certainly graduates, as were three of the last four vicars of St. Oswald, in this period, three of the last four rectors of Holy Trinity, and all the last five rectors of St. Mary's on the Hill.

[2] " It may be that bachelors of Arts sometimes only knew enough to construe their breviary or master an episcopal mandate." (Smith, *Pre-Reformation England*, p. 41.)

[3] In 1532, some of the service books of Holy Trinity church were in print and some still in manuscript. (Beresford, " Churchwardens' Accounts of Holy Trinity ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXVIII, p. 96.)

[4] Thus, in the fourteenth century, we know of nineteen canons who were certainly graduates, and of these six at least went on to higher legal studies. Out of twenty-six graduates in the fifteenth century, fourteen did so, and out of thirteen in the sixteenth century, six. Of the other graduates, there are only nine who are clearly designated as masters or bachelors or arts. The remainder are known to be graduates only from their being described as " magister ", a term which seems to have been loosely used to cover any and every degree. The abiding impression is that nearly every graduate in the chapter had read some canon and civil law at the university.

noticed, who proceeded, as many of them did, beyond the basic arts course, went on to specialized studies in canon and civil law. Not one of the canons of St. John's, and only one of the deans, is said to have studied theology. This is what one would expect, because they were, after all, lawyers and administrators by profession, rather than priests, but while the parochial clergy did evince a somewhat greater interest in theology, we find only three who possessed special qualifications in divinity, as against nine who had chosen the law.[1]

This over-specialization on the side of law, is not altogether to be deprecated. The legal science of the later middle ages was, perhaps, their greatest intellectual achievement. It must be admitted, however, that such studies did not always provide the best training for the spiritual pastors and masters of an almost illiterate community.

In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the abbey of St. Werburgh,[2] and to an even greater extent the Dominican convent in Chester,[3] had been centres of considerable intellectual activity. It seems probable that the Dominican house retained to the end some remnants of its ancient glories,[4] but among the black monks the tradition of learning was dead, even by the middle of the fifteenth century.[5]

PLURALISM, NON-RESIDENCE AND GENERAL MORALS

A number of allied and very important questions remain to be asked. To what extent were the incumbents of Chester livings residents in Holy

[1] Cf. the speech of Cardinal D'Ailly at the Council of Constance. " The Roman Court . . . hath despised the theologians and preferred those who study the lucrative sciences [of law] in every rank of churchmen. The early primitive theologians built up the Church, but certain pettifoggers have destroyed her." (Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. IV, p. 48.)

[2] When it had produced such writers as Lucian and Ranulf Higden, and the author of the city's mystery plays.

[3] Two thirteenth-century friars of this convent, Henry de Eschburn and William de Macclesfield, won an international repute as scholars. (Palmer, " The Blackfriars of Chester ", *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 98.)

[4] In May, 1476, Brother Thomas Roberts of this convent was assigned to Glasgow, where he was born. He was then empowered to preach throughout all Scotland and to teach the liberal arts in the convent to which he was transferred, if the majority of the brethren consented. (Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 100.)

[5] In 1423, a charge was brought against Abbot Yerdesley that he had not maintained a scholar at Oxford or Cambridge for twelve years, " secundum tenorem Constitutionem Benedictorum ". (*Pantin*, vol. II, p. 150.) The abbot had previously been fined for this offence by the provincial chapter in 1399 (*ibid.*, vol. III, p. 175), and again in 1408. (*Ibid.*, p. 149.) His fine on this latter occasion was the largest of a number made under this head, which suggests that he was considered guilty of serious negligence. Cf. also the list of MSS. attributed to St. Werburgh's, in Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 31, which is very meagre and compares very unfavourably with that of the Dominicans. (*Ibid.*, p. 32.)

Orders, who undertook personally the cure of souls in their parishes? To what extent was the witness of the church vitiated by extremes of pluralism and non-residence?

Again, much has been written on this subject from a partisan point of view, or, what is perhaps worse, by writers who have given currency to a loose and inaccurate usage of the term "pluralism", a term which, in fact, corresponds to a perfectly clear and precisely defined concept of ecclesiastical law.[1] Pluralism is "the occupation of two or more ecclesiastical benefices with cures of souls annexed, at one and the same time".[2] A clerk might hold thirty benefices without being a pluralist in the strict sense of the word, if they were all but one sinecures, as were all ordinary prebends in cathedral and collegiate churches. A long series of papal enactments in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had reduced the grant of dispensations to hold incompatible benefices to a regular system, in the interests both of clerical discipline and of the papal finances. "It became easy", writes Professor A. H. Thompson, "for a man, who went through the necessary formalities, to obtain the right to hold two cures of souls, but extensions of dispensations to include three cures were not frequent, and further dispensations were practically unknown." [3]

This generalization might be amply illustrated from the biographical information on the canons of St. John's, assembled in the present study. When we consider the number of really eminent administrators among them we may well "stand amazed at their moderation" in the acquisition of benefices. If we exclude John de Hothum, the future bishop of Ely, who lived, of course, at the very beginning of our period, evidence of gross pluralism is very hard to find before the reign of Henry VIII. Before 1530, only twenty-two members of the chapter are known to have held two incompatible benefices, and only eight to have held three, while none at all are certainly known to have held more.

While the engrossing of a large number of sinecures did not constitute pluralism it was frowned upon by the church as leading to an inequitable distribution of clerical wealth, and severe checks were put upon the practice from time to time.[4] Only three or four members of this chapter

[1] The definitive discussion of this topic is in Thompson, "Pluralism in the Medieval Church", *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, vol. XXXIII, p. 35 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 35. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[4] Thus the Bull Execrabilis of 1317 and the Bull Consueta of 1366 limited clerks to the possession of one cure and a sinecure only, and obliged them to surrender such others as they might possess into the hands of the pope. A loophole was however offered by the partial exemption from these provisions of noble and learned clerks. Consueta permitted the holders of D.D. and I.U.B. degrees to hold as many as four livings, and this permission must have given cover to a very large proportion of all the pluralists affected by the bull. (*Ibid.*, pp. 61, 69 and 70.)

held three or more prebends elsewhere during the period of their association with St. John's. There are only five examples of canons who certainly held two other sinecures. Of course, it should be remembered that to trace every benefice held by such a large number of clerks is a very long and exacting task, and accuracy is the more difficult to attain since the type of cleric who held two or three sinecures was often prone to make frequent exchanges. It is certain that a great many, probably the majority, of the canons held other livings which the writer has not discovered, and it is likely that these were sinecures in most cases.

A reasonably clear general picture does, however, emerge from this somewhat scrappy evidence, and it shows that the possession of, say, two benefices with cure, and two or three sinecures, was all that could be hoped for by any save the most pushing and successful of clerical breadwinners.[1]

It is interesting to notice that there seems to have been a marked increase in pluralism at the very time when the "reformers" were asserting their independence of Rome. Out of fifteen deans and canons, between 1530 and the dissolution of the college, we know of two who held two incompatible livings, one who held three, two who held four, one, Walker, who probably held five, and of two others who enjoyed incomes amounting to at least £50 elsewhere.

Of residence at St. John's, one can say little with confidence, as there is virtually no positive evidence on this head. The deanery, although a sinecure,[2] was considered an incompatible benefice,[3] which ordinarily required the residence of its incumbent. Although we know of only three deans in the fourteenth century, who obtained licences for absence,[4] it is evident from the tenor of a whole series of fourteenth-century episcopal visitations that residence on the part of the dean was at best intermittent in that century. Of the later deans, all that can be said is that seven, at least, out of the thirteen admitted after 1430, had other interests which must have occupied them almost permanently else-

[1] We have one interesting example of the enforcement of papal legislation against pluralism. In Jan., 1355, the pope made provision to the deanery, declaring it to be void by the then dean's acceptance of the church of Mold. The provision was contested unsuccessfully by Thrikyngham, the dispossessed dean. See page 125.

[2] *C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 270. This was a very unusual state of affairs before the reign of Henry VIII. (Thompson, "Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons", *Archaeological Journal*, vol. LXXIV, p. 147.)

[3] *C.P.L.*, vol. VII, p. 282. Probably on the grounds that the dean had archidiaconal rights in respect of the collegiate church and the city churches appropriated to it. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, p. 282.)

[4] Alexander de Dalby obtained a two-year licence from the bishop of Lichfield in 1362, but he was constantly employed for a much longer period on royal business in London and Gascony. John Leyot obtained in 1412 a papal indult to farm his deanery for life, while his successor Richard Leyot, absent in the service of the duke of Bedford, had obtained a similar licence to farm all his benefices before he became dean.

where. The canons usually had little incentive to take up residence in Chester, and a careful estimate of the probabilities indicates that there were never more than two or three in residence at one time. Attendance was probably rather more regular in the fifteenth century, than it had been in the fourteenth, when there seem often to have been no residentiaries at all.

We should not expect to find many instances of serious pluralism in the parish churches of the city. It was among the extensive and wealthy parishes of the countryside that this abuse was always most persistent and flourishing.[1] In fact, while the comparative poverty of most of the livings in Chester rendered some pluralism inevitable, it was rarely, if ever, carried to such lengths as to interfere seriously with the work of the church there.

Five of our rectors and one vicar of St. Oswald's held prebends at St. John's in conjunction with their cures.[2] One held the sacristanship there,[3] and one was also archdeacon of Chester.[4]

Six held sinecures elsewhere, one holding two, and one, three.[5] Three incumbents held another cure in the immediate neighbourhood of the city,[6] and in four instances two of the city livings were occupied for a time by the same incumbent.[7] All these were sensible arrangements, at which the greatest purist could hardly cavil. Fifteen Chester parsons held one benefice with cure elsewhere, one held two, and one, John Brereton, who was presented to St. Mary's in 1534, held four. In eight of these instances, however, the second living was situated in Cheshire or North Wales,[8] so that their possession did not preclude some residence

[1] Thompson, "Pluralism in the Medieval Church", *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, vol. XXXIII, p. 37.

[2] Clipston (St. Mary's, 1314), Chilterne (St. Mary's, 1361), J. Leyot (St. Peter's, 1402), Roger Asser (St. Peter's, 1444), Massy (Holy Trinity, 1455), Godefelowe (St. Oswald's, 1476).

[3] John de Halghton (St. Peter's, 1377).

[4] Veysy (St. Mary's, 1499).

[5] Clipston held a prebend at Lichfield together with one at St. John's, and Chilterne held prebends of Gnossall and Lichfield. Retford (St. Mary's, 1327) and Watteford (Holy Trinity, 1328), canons of Chichester; Capenhurst (St. Mary's, 1335), canon of St. Asaph; Squier (St. Mary's, 1361), canon of Westbury.

[6] William de Newhagh (Holy Trinity, 1405), rector of Burton; Godefelowe, rector of Waverton; Brereton, rector of Christleton.

[7] Jordan de Marthale was rector both of St. Peter's and St. Olaf's, 1320–3; T. Wemme (St. Olaf's, 1436) was also cantarist of the Blessed Virgin; Henry Rayneforde was rector of Holy Trinity and vicar of St. Oswald's, 1493–6; Robert Canlyn was rector of Holy Trinity and vicar of St. Oswald's, 1507–13. He was also rector of Acton, but probably lived in Chester.

[8] Three Chester rectors held also the rectory of West Kirby. (Hey, St. Peter's, 1431; Crecy, St. Olaf's, 1454; Bolton, St. Peter's, 1466.) Bromburgh (St. Olaf's, 1377), parson of Aldford; Stanley, rector of Winwick; Rayneforde, of a moiety of Malpas; Canlyn, of Acton; Mynes (Holy Trinity, 1427), also for a time vicar of Mold.

in Chester on the part of their incumbents, who, in any case, probably preferred the life of the town to that of an isolated rural parish.

The majority of the city's rectors were Cheshire men, who served churches in the county throughout their whole lives. Very many are clearly shown, from the frequent occurrence of their names in local records, to have been resident in Chester during the period of their incumbency there.[1] For the whole period, we know only of three who applied for, and obtained, leave of absence for study.[2] R. de Watteford (Holy Trinity, 1328) was a clerk in the household of Robert de Ufford, earl of Suffolk, and later, while still rector here, an officer of the exchequer. John de Purston, presented to the same living by Queen Isabella in 1349, was not in Holy Orders, and, by implication, an absentee. The three royal clerks, already noticed as rectors of St. Mary's, were not bound to reside, and Walter de Chilterne, the chancellor of Lichfield, was probably not a devoted parish priest. Brereton, of course, was an arrant pluralist, and so too was James Stanley, the fourth son of the first baron Stanley, who obtained St. Mary's in 1458, under the terms of a papal dispensation, which enabled him to obtain two incompatible livings as soon as he reached the age of eighteen. Five more rectors should probably he reckoned as total absentees,[3] and to these may be added perhaps as many more,[4] who may have been obliged to absent themselves from the city from time to time to attend to neglected duties elsewhere.

To sum up: two out of twenty rectors of St. Peter's were absentees; five out of twenty-five of Holy Trinity; three out of thirteen of St. Olaf's; seven out of twenty of St. Mary's, which as the richest living naturally suffered most.[5] It is perhaps important to notice that there was never a period of any length after 1380, in which more than one of the city's rectors were continually absent, at the same time. It cannot therefore

[1] Some rectors became attached to the churches which they served. At least three rectors of St. Mary's, for example, made bequests for the erection of a memorial window in the church. (Wylaston, 1403; Pensell, 1430; Davenport, 1528.)

[2] John Squier, the then rector of St. Mary's, obtained a year's leave for study from the bishop in 1362. Robert Halstede (Holy Trinity, 1414) obtained in 1414 a papal indult to farm his livings for seven years while studying at a university. For Henry Rayneforde see page 21 above.

[3] Penkerych (Holy Trinity, 1369), rector of Iffley, Oxfordshire; Knollys (St. Olaf's, 1434), precentor of Lichfield; Fr. John Henry Argentine (St. Olaf's, 1460), rector of Witchurch, Lincoln dio.; Robert Bekynshaw (St. Peter's, 1501) became Master of Queen's Hall, Cambridge, three years after he gave up this living, an unlikely appointment for a man who had devoted himself to parochial duties; Thomas Bradshawe occurs in 1535, the year before his presentation to Holy Trinity, as vicar of Godshill, Hants, and of North Stoke, Oxfordshire.

[4] The three who were rectors of West Kirby, Bromburgh, Canlyn and Veysy, who was also rector of Stoke in Teignhead, Exeter, dio., and archdeacon of Chester.

[5] The vicars of St. Oswald's were, of course, normally obliged to reside, and there is no evidence which suggests that they did not do so.

be said that absenteeism, after that date, ever reached the proportions of a grave abuse.

It is clear from the records of the city courts that Chester was always troubled by a considerable number of underpaid and under-employed chaplains, who were obliged to seek their livings in unsuitable occupations, and who spent a good deal of their time in mischievous idleness,[1] but such unfavourable notices of the beneficed clergy are far less common. Of only two incumbents can it be justly said that their behaviour fell below the ordinary level of respectable citizenship.[2] This circumstance reflects the discretion of the monks in the selection of their presentees, and in any assessment of the contribution made by the abbey to the religious life of the town, the judicious and responsible exercise of its advowson rights must weigh heavily upon the credit side.

We cannot be surprised that the wretched vicars of St. John's were not conspicuous for pastoral zeal. A series of fourteenth-century visitations show that they habitually neglected the services of the college in favour of "loitering in taverns", and following after "spectacles and pageants".[3] One of them at least was a "married" man,[4] and they resisted throughout the century all attempts to make them live a common life under one roof.[5]

To say so much and no more would be to paint too black a picture. The large number of testamentary bequests to priests testify to the friendship and respect often felt for them by lay folk, and it is significant that such gifts are made to stipendiary priests and guild chaplains very much more frequently than to the vicars and rectors themselves. The extremely common occurrence of clerics as feoffees certainly suggests that some priests were too immersed in the affairs of this world, but it also shows that public opinion presumed a priest to be an honest man.

The student must not expect to find, among the religious of the

[1] e.g. William Wirhall, chaplain, indicted, 24 Hen. VII, for a common hazarder and player at tables (Customs Entry Book, 1502–26); Robert Fraunces, chaplain, a frequent offender, charged, 10 Hen. VII, with being a common night walker (*Morris*, p. 149 n.); John Baddo, the curate of St. Mary's, was a night walker, 13 Hen. VII, together with Fraunces, John Kyngesley, chaplain, and John Trafford, chaplain. (Customs Entry Book.) We also find chaplains indicted under the Assize of Bread and Ale.

[2] John Squier of Seynesbury, pardoned for murder; Hugh Pellyn (St. Peter's, 1487) bound over to keep the peace with scandalous frequency.

[3] Visitations of 1331 (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 41), 1346 (*ibid.*, f. 118), and 1400 (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 483).

[4] Thomas Wemme, the elder.

[5] Ineffectual injunctions to this effect were issued after all the three visitations noticed above, but it seems that they were always disregarded. Four of the vicars were defamed for incontinence in the "Compendium Compertorum" of 1536. (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. X, p. 142.)

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, an enthusiastic denial of the flesh or a strict regard for the letter of the Benedictine rule. The relaxation of that rule, in matters of occupation and diet, had become so well established that a succession of reforming popes had been forced to recognize it as ancient and good custom.[1] The atmosphere even of a well-ordered house had become that of a club, or perhaps of an eighteenth-century Oxford college, rather than that of a home of devoted asceticism.

The black monks of St. Werburgh's were, at least, no better than the majority of their brethren elsewhere. The visitor laboured in vain to suppress the practice of monetary distributions to the monks.[2] The monks adopted "luxurious dress", no doubt following lay fashions so far as they dared.[3] They were often zealous huntsmen, and kept many greyhounds "to the diminution of alms".[4] In diet, they infringed even the provisions of the relaxed rule.[5] The visitor sometimes complained that divine service was neglected and that the night offices, especially, were not duly observed.[6] As in innumerable other cases, we hear much of monks gadding about outside the cloister and engaging in unnecessary—sometimes "suspect"—converse with lay folk.[7] Most of these deficiencies of discipline appear at the very beginning of our period, in an episcopal visitation of 1315, and they recur with some regularity until at least 1426, when the Benedictine General Chapter appointed special visitors for this house, fearing that they would find "graves articuli correctionis",[8] too serious to be dealt with effectively by the ordinary visitor.

Evidence of sexual immorality is difficult to evaluate. There is no reason to believe that the monks of St. Werburgh's were notoriously

[1] Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. IV, p. 564.

[2] It was forbidden in 1323 (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 36), but Archbishop Arundel found it again in 1400. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 483.)

[3] Visitations of 1315 (Lich. Reg., vol. I, p. 53), 1323 and 1400, when Arundel enjoined that the monks "flocos aut cucullas plicatas super pectus et dorsum non gestent sed planas sine plicatura habeant et honestas". In 1408 several monks convicted of luxurious living. (*Morris*, p. 128.)

[4] In 1315, it was found that greyhounds and other dogs were kept in the monastery and that the prior was in the habit of going out hunting with bow and arrow. In 1323, the abbot was keeping hunting dogs. In 1449, Abbot Oldham, then a monk, was indicted for hunting in the royal park at Shotwick (*Morris*, p. 132) and again in 1479. (*Ibid.*)

[5] Visitation of 1315.

[6] Visitation of 1400.

[7] 1315, monks living on distant manors; 1323, monks have been leaving the cloister without permission and there is only one monk, living alone, in the cell on Hilbre island. No attempt, of course, was made, in these centuries, to confine the monks strictly within the walls of the monastery. Throughout the fifteenth century, the monks seem to have been fairly free to go out into the city.

[8] *Pantin*, vol. II, p. 174.

dissolute. (Even Layton and Legh were only able to report one as incontinent.) [1] At the same time, there were nearly always a few weaker brethren in the convent.[2] The life of Abbot Sutton does not seem to have been entirely above reproach,[3] and on one occasion, at least, during the fifteenth century, there was a notable public scandal in the city.[4]

More serious was the spirit of violent insubordination which had grown up in the convent, and which was perhaps sometimes provoked by an intemperate exercise of the abbot's authority. Again as early as 1315, we find three brethren removed as incorrigible to other houses,[5] a measure which the visitors saw fit to repeat in 1362.[6]

The violence of the brethren was not confined within the convent. In the fifteenth-century records of the city courts crimes of violence by the monks are frequently noticed.[7]

The same denial of the monastic vocation is to be found in the convent of St. Mary. The nuns, though seldom dissolute,[8] were persistently worldly. They gossiped with lay folk and neglected divine service. They lived in separate apartments, and left the convent precincts without permission or sufficient cause.[9] By the sixteenth century, at least, possession of private property by the nuns had come to be accepted as natural and proper.[10]

The friars, especially the Carmelites, were frequent brawlers and disturbers of the peace,[11] but they do not seem thereby to have forfeited

[1] *Letter & Papers of Hen. VIII*, vol. X, p. 141.

[2] 1323; three monks incontinent. It is enjoined that one of them, Walter Peweyn, is never to have speech with any woman, even a relation, except in the presence of the abbot or one of the " presidentes ". In 1400, Arundel felt it necessary to forbid the monks to hold converse with " suspect " women.

[3] Arundel enjoined that the abbot should be always accompanied by one or two chaplains, to witness to his conversation. They were to sleep every night in his chamber, so that there should be no excuse for sinister suspicions.

[4] In 1481, when divers women were indicted for being whores to the monks of Chester. Harl. 2057, f. 114.

[5] Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 53.

[6] When several monks were moved to St. Albans to be properly trained in regular observance. (*Pantin*, vol. III, pp. 34 and 35.)

[7] *Morris*, Chapter III, *passim*.

[8] Two nuns were defamed as incontinent in the visitation of 1456 (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 81), and one was named for the same offence by Layton and Legh in 1536. (*Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. X, p. 141.)

[9] All these faults are clearly implied in the visitors' injunctions of 1331 (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 40) and 1456. Arundel visited the convent in 1400 (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, p. 477), but his injunctions do not appear to have survived.

[10] Cf. the will of Margaret Hawarden, proved Jan., 1521. (*Piccope*, vol. II, p. 6 *et seq.*) Mrs. Hawarden left, " unto Dame Margery Passmych, priores of the said nonrye, those kye which be in my haye that I hold of her except 2 kye "; and personal gifts to several other of the sisters.

[11] *Morris*, pp. 145–7.

the esteem of the citizens,[1] nor is there any evidence that their houses were felt to be remarkably disorderly.[2]

[1] See below, page 96.

[2] In 1356 and again in 1397, for example, refractory members of other Dominican convents were removed to Chester. This would suggest that in the fourteenth century, at least, this house was considered to be exemplary in regular discipline. (Bennett, " The Black Friars of Chester ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXIX, pp. 46 and 47.)

CHAPTER III

A HOUSE DIVIDED—CONSTITUTIONAL DISPUTES

THE well-being of the church was threatened, and its witness gravely compromised by interminable disputes—between the church and the municipal authorities, between the several churches and religious houses, and within individual communities. Such conflicts, constitutional in form but largely financial in origin, are a recurrent feature in the history of ecclesiastical institutions throughout Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As the economic difficulties of the church increased, laymen everywhere were alienated by this unedifying struggle for larger slices of a steadily diminishing cake, and churchmen grew more and more narrowly concerned with the privileges of their own order.

The differences between the city and the abbey were similar in character to those which chequered the history of most towns burdened with the unpleasing proximity of a large convent. Fundamentally, it was the conflict of Empire and Papacy enacted around the parish pump. The pretensions of the medieval church to be regarded as an " imperium in imperio ", penetrated to every level of social activity, and at every level their most effective expression took economic form. In the sphere of municipal life, these pretensions severely hampered the expanding activities of the nascent middle classes, and fostered among them that anti-clerical spirit which was to culminate in the protestant revolution. The struggle of the bourgeoisie against the church was a struggle for economic opportunities. In plain words, it was a struggle for money.

Not only were the monks the greatest landholders of the neighbourhood, but it was they, and not the citizens, who were licensed to hold the great annual fair on the feast of St. John the Baptist.[1] During this fair, the traders of the city were obliged to close their shops, while outsiders were able to compete with them for the hire of the stalls erected by the monks before the abbey gates.[2] The abbot levied a kind of purchase tax upon all commercial transactions, and a duty upon all cargoes brought by ship into the port during the four days of the fair. He had cognizance of all crimes, except homicide, committed during the same period. No malefactor coming to the fair might be arrested

[1] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 286. The right to hold this fair may have been granted to the abbey by Earl Hugh Lupus (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 385), but the charter is not above suspicion.

[2] *Hewitt*, p. 127.

while it lasted, unless he was guilty of some new offence.[1] The abbey tenants, numerous both within and without the city, claimed to be free of all tolls,[2] scot and lot, and murage. They owed suit, not to the city courts, but to the abbot's court of St. Thomas.[3] They could disregard with impunity the legislation of the gild merchant, which sought to restrict to its own members the exercise of certain crafts within the liberties of the city.[4] Such privileges, galling even in the days of expanding prosperity, must have appeared intolerable to the citizens of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, faced as they then were with impending economic ruin.

Yet the inevitable clash of jurisdictions between the city and the abbey would appear to have developed slowly. The monks had the wisdom to meet the city traders' strongest objections to the conduct of the fair,[5] and, during the rule of a politic abbot like Simon of Whitchurch (1265–91), relations with the town authorities seem to have been reasonably smooth. The generous hospitality of the monks,[6] and the mystery plays sponsored by the abbey, sweetened the bitterness of economic rivalry. When the monks of the fourteenth century complained of the hostility of the laity, they seem to have been thinking rather of their neighbours in the country than the citizens at their gates.[7]

But abbots were not always politic. Richard de Seynesbury (1349–62) and Thomas de Newport (1362–85) were rash, quarrelsome and high-handed, and their pontificates saw a serious and permanent deterioration of relations with the city. The dispute turned upon four main points: the conduct of the fair, the obligation of the abbot's tenants, most of whom lived in Northgate Street, to pay scot and lot and to appear, when summoned, before the city courts, the boundary of the rival jurisdictions in Northgate Street, and the powers of the city officers within

[1] *Morris*, p. 117. *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 286; except in cases of homicide.

[2] *Morris*, p. 378. Hopkins, *Select Rolls of the Chester City Courts*, p. lvii.

[3] *Gastrell*, p. 121.

[4] This claim continued to be made by the Dean and Chapter of the new cathedral until 1563. (*Morris*, p. 442.)

[5] *Hewitt*, p. 128. "In 1288 a settlement was reached by which the citizens were allowed to erect booths for themselves and for hire, provided that they were away from the open space in front of the abbey gate. The abbot further conceded the right of stallage in fair time to the citizens for 46*s*. 8*d*. a year." A further agreement on the same lines was concluded between the abbey and the city in 1317. (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 389.)

[6] Cf. *Hewitt*, p. 68. "In 1351 the abbey [was] . . . so excessively burdened by the frequent visits of the people of the county . . . that their possessions hardly sufficed." (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 18.)

[7] e.g. Order of the Black Prince to the justice of Chester to supervise the abbeys of Chester, Vale Royal, Dieulacres and Combermere, reciting that he had heard that they are . . . wrongfully annoyed and harrassed in many . . . ways by the people of these parts . . . The justice is therefore to restrain any persons who from malice are going about to molest or annoy them. (*Ibid.*)

the precincts of the abbey.[1] In form the conflict was one between rival privileges; its content was a struggle to increase the financial profits accruing from these privileges.

Nothing would be gained by a detailed account of the tedious feud, which dragged its weary length through all the remaining history of the abbey. Now an abbot is accused of trying citizens in his court;[2] now an indignant sheriff, seeking to arrest certain abbey servants for a breach of the peace, is, himself, held a prisoner in the monastery.[3] In the fifteenth century, fights between citizens and inhabitants of the monastery were of almost daily occurrence.[4] Only twice, however, did matters come to a crisis, and on both occasions the monks were defeated. In September, 1478, Abbot Oldham was bound under the enormous sum of £1,000 to keep the peace to John Southworth, the mayor.[5] The great charter of Henry VII, granted in 1506 and representing as it did the final goal of the city's struggle for municipal autonomy, precipitated a last trial of strength with the abbey. The award of the royal arbitrators, which ended the conflict of 1507–9, gave a complete victory to the citizens on all the points at issue, and was only accepted by the monks with very bad grace.[6]

Religious veneration for the monastic habit withered in this atmosphere. The abbey was no longer regarded as a centre of spiritual power, but as a mere economic incubus, the home of unproductive abbey-lubbers. In the end, when Henry VIII's terrible Vicar-General had risen up against the monks, the very porter at St. Werburgh's gates was to appeal to the city council against his employers.[7]

The monks of St. Werburgh's were the only powerful corporation against which the citizens had to contend, but they were not alone in the enjoyment of peculiar privileges. The Benedictine nuns of St. Mary's

[1] A further ground of friction, of which mention might be made, was the sanctuary rights of the abbey. In 1354 the abbot complained that the chamberlain of Chester was making distraint upon his tenants, on account of the escape of a thief from the abbey church. (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 146.)

[2] In 1372, Abbot Thomas de Newport was indicted for having, among other offences, compelled persons who were not his tenants to appear at his court, and punished them there for certain offences and debts. (*Morris*, pp. 126–7.)

[3] Sheriff John Hope in 1415. (*Morris*, p. 129 n.)

[4] *Morris*, p. 129 n.

[5] C.R.R., 18 & 19 Ed. IV. m. 2(6) in Appendix II, *Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 780.

[6] Matters came to a head in 1507, when the abbot was alleged to have taken recognizances for a breach of the peace in Northgate Street. (*Morris*, p. 133 n.)

[7] In 1534 Charles Clarke, the porter, petitioned Cromwell, complaining that he had been deprived of his office, after 50 years of service to the abbey, and asking the Vicar-General to write to the mayor, justice and aldermen of Chester to settle the matter, and to the abbot to abide by their decision. (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. VII, p. 606.) Abbot Birchenshaw was especially high-handed and unpopular. Cf. *Burne*, p. 16 *et seq.*

also possessed their own franchise from which all officers of the earl were excluded. Their tenants owed suit of court to the prioress' manor of Handbridge. They were exempted from suit of the city courts, and from all tolls, customs, and other financial charges, such as pontage and murage, from watch and from " works of any kind ".[1]

The liberties of such a poor and small house did not present such a challenge to the aspirations of the burgesses as did the immunities of St. Werburgh's, and the nuns in their differences with the city were always able to count on the staunch support given them by the earl as their founder. The nuns were not, therefore, as the monks were, the constant centre of local controversy, but their privileges were, none the less, a source of irritation to the laity, and must have made an unfavourable contribution to the public estimate of established religious institutions.

The privileges of the convent offended the citizens in three principal ways. Most galling, was the claim made on behalf of its tenants to freedom from all local taxation, but they also begrudged the nuns' exemption from toll at Dee Mills and their right to be served first there,[2] and there was a longstanding fear that the franchises of the nuns' manor of Handbridge might provide a cover for the " foreign " craftsmen whom the gild merchant sought persistently to exclude from the commerce of the city.[3]

Relations between St. Mary's and the city seem to have been most strained in the middle years of the fourteenth century.

In May, 1354, the Black Prince had to intervene to prevent a distraint for a fine of five hundred marks, which the mayor and sheriffs were making against the tenants and prioress of the convent,[4] and again two years later he made an order, " to the mayor, sheriffs and good men of Chester . . . to cease from troubling the prioress and nuns of Chester, and their tenants, in the matter of toll and other customs, in contravention of the charters granted by the prince and his predecessors, earls of Chester ".[5] In these years, a serious attempt was being made to overthrow the nuns' franchises. To obtain a royal confirmation of charters

[1] *Morris*, p. 139; Harl. 2101, f. 188, in *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 346.

[2] *Morris*, p. 139.

[3] As late as the reign of Elizabeth, there was a dispute between the bakers of Chester and the tenants of the manor of Handbridge, who claimed the right to sell bread in Chester " by reason of many grants from the crown to the Nuns of Chester ". Harl. 1996, f. 583. In 1613, William Brereton, who had succeeded to the site of the nunnery and a good part of the nuns' property in Handbridge and elsewhere, was involved in an action which turned on the claim of the nuns to be free from toll imposed upon foreigners coming to the corn market. (Harl. 2101, f. 164.) (N.B.—No date is given for this entry, but it is ascribed to the 10th year of a king, whom the writer supposes must have been James I.)

[4] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 162.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

was usually an expensive business, yet the nuns, poor as they were, sought and obtained such confirmations in 1353, 1358, 1383, 1393,[1] and 1400,[2] and, in spite of royal protection, felt obliged to make some concession. The confirmation of 1358 specifically excludes such of their tenants as might be freemen of the city from the usual exemptions and adds the proviso, " that the said nuns and their successors should not bring upon their estates tenants of any other description than those which they then had, or exercise any trade injurious to the merchandise of the city ".

These concessions did not, however, satisfy the city, for we hear that, in 1392, the prioress was obliged to give a bond of £1,000, an immense sum, that her tenants should appear at courts and pay all duties as other citizens.[3] If the citizens had been able to maintain this stand, the nuns' privileges would have been at an end. They were, however, forced to withdraw their most extreme demands, almost as soon, probably, as they were made. In 1499, the prioress was able to claim all the old privileges of the priory, in answer to a writ of quo warranto.[4] In the sixteenth century, the nuns paid the city a " gable rent " of 20*s.* per annum " for liberties given unto them ".[5]

Further occasions of friction were presented by the lesser religious bodies of the city. St. John's hospital enjoyed, from its foundation, freedom from " *omni servicio et omni exaccione seculari* ".[6] As in the case of the nuns, the city was able to insist that this freedom should not be used to excuse any freeman from fulfilling his municipal duties,[7] but the fear remained that it gave cover to non-freemen who were excluded from the exercise of their trade within the liberties.[8]

The privileges of the leper asylum of St. Giles' included a vexatious toll " from everything carried to sale at Chester market ".[9] We know nothing of the history of any disputes which occurred between the city and these hospitals,[10] but it is clear that public opinion was alienated

[1] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 346.

[2] *Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 296.

[3] Harl. 7568, f. 190.

[4] Harl. 2115, f. 59 in *Morris*, p. 139. Morris mistranslates item (5). It should read " that her tenants, who were not freemen, should not be put upon juries, and be free of murage &c."

[5] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXII, p. 88.

[6] Stewart-Brown, " The Hospital of St. John at Chester ", *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 67.

[7] Cf. confirmation of liberties by letters patent, Nov., 1414. (Harl. 2159, f. 100 d. Stewart-Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 75.)

[8] *Morris*, p. 442.

[9] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 352.

[10] Some such disputes did occur. In 1492, for example, Thomas Crue, master of St. John's, was bound over to behave peaceably towards the mayor. (Chester Mayor's Book, 1492–3, f. 10.)

from them by a long history of corruption and mismanagement. In the hard times of the early sixteenth century, the city fathers felt that the gates of these institutions should be opened only to cases of real need,[1] and they resented the presence there of paupers who were not natives of the city.[2]

The tiny convents of the three orders of friars can hardly have been felt as a burden,[3] yet there does occur notice of an apparently serious dispute between the citizens and the Dominicans in 1384,[4] and on one occasion the Carmelite convent was invaded by a band of armed men.[5] The patience of the laity was further tried by claims to jurisdiction over his Chester tenants, which were sometimes advanced by the bishop of Lichfield.[6]

The two largest foundations in the city, St. Werburgh's and St. John's, stood in a more intimate relationship with many of the citizens, than that of mere neighbours. About one quarter of the population of Chester must have been parishioners either of the abbey or of the collegiate church.

When the parish church was a collegiate organization, the rights of the parishioners were normally limited to the nave, and in the thirteenth century the parishioners of "the altar of St. Oswald" seem to have worshipped in the nave of the abbey church. They were then "bound to enclose their cemetery and repair the wall, windows and roof of the nave aisle of the church of St. Werburgh, adjoining that cemetery, from the great door on that side to opposite the altar of St. Oswald".[7] It was naturally desirable, from the monk's point of view, to exclude the parishioners entirely from the monastic precincts. This object was achieved, probably about 1290,[8] when the chapel of St. Nicholas was erected for the use of the parishioners at the south-western corner of the precincts, on the site of the present cinema. This chapel continued

[1] Cf. a complaint of 1537 against St. Giles, that although the city was burdened with the market toll for the support of the hospital, it was then occupied, for the most part, "by mighty whole and sound persons able to labour". (Harl. 2063, f. 126, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXV, p. 50.)

[2] Cf. the letter, *c.* 1520, from the mayor to the absentee master of St. John's (Stewart-Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 76), and the terms of the foundation of the new almshouse of St. Ursula, 1508. (See below page 99.)

[3] The Dominicans were granted exemption from toll at Dee Mills in 1383, which was confirmed to them for ever in 1395. (*Morris*, p. 146.) The Carmelites were granted similar exemption for three years in May, 1400. (*Ibid.*, p. 147.)

[4] *Reg. Gilbert*, p. 56. See below, page 141.

[5] 3 Hen. VI, *Morris*, p. 147.

[6] May, 1357, petition of the mayor, &c., to the Black Prince. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 243.)

[7] Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. I, p. 117.

[8] *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, Pt. III, p. 254. The abbot obtained papal confirmation of the foundation and statutes of a chapel of St. Nicholas within the precincts of the monastery in 1348. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 134.)

to serve as the parish church until after the dissolution, when the parishioners secured the use of the south transept of the new cathedral, and the chapel was converted into the Common Hall.[1]

There is some reason to think that the parishioners of St. John's were similarly excluded from the original parish church. There was a chapel in the churchyard, which is described in a plan of 1589 as " the old parish church or chapel of St. James, now used as a garner ".[2]

These arrangements probably served, as they were intended, to remove the causes of friction, rather than to aggravate them, since no history of conflict between the parishioners and the corporate rectors has come down to us.

If frequent bickerings over religious immunities produced an attitude of guarded hostility to the church on the part of the lay public, that public can hardly have been appeased by the further edifying spectacle of similar rivalries, similarly financial at bottom, which existed between the several religious institutions of the town.

The character of these rivalries is well illustrated by a number of thirteenth-century agreements enrolled in the chartulary of St. Werburgh's. The first is an agreement between the abbot and the brethren of the hospital of St. John,[3] by which all the secular servants of the hospital, except the gardener, the butler (*claviger*), the prior's groom, and the woman in attendance upon the sick, were to pay their tithe to the church of St. Werburgh, in whose parish the hospital was situated. The abbot conceded that strangers and travellers might receive the sacrament in the church of the hospital and make offerings there.

With the exception of Holy Trinity, all the parish churches in Chester belonged either to the abbey or the collegiate church, and it was therefore natural that the monks and the canons should have formed a defensive alliance [4] to check the decline in parochial revenues, which was threatened, in the thirteenth century, by the growing popularity of the lesser religious houses as burial places. If a citizen chose to be buried outside his own parish church, not only did the curate have difficulty in securing his

[1] It is often said that the agreement of 1488, between the abbot and parishioners, concerning repairs to be made to the " new church of St. Oswald ", marks the move into the south transept, but Tait shows that, in fact, it probably refers to an enlargement of St. Nicholas. (Tait, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. xviii.) Not until Jan., 1539, did the city secure a ninety-nine years lease on St. Nicholas Chapel (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXX, p. 2), and not until 1546 did it become the New Common Hall. (Harl. 1944, f. 61.)

[2] Burne, " The Falling Towers of St. John ", in *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXVI, pt. I, p. 19.

[3] Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. II, p. 299.

[4] Agreement between the monks of St. Werburgh and the canons of St. John's to preserve inviolate the ancient customs observed between them with regard to burial in the city, which is common to both, and to resist any infringement of their right. (*Ibid.*, p. 300.)

proper mortuary fee, but payments for anniversary celebrations and other bequests were almost certainly alienated. It was agreed,[1] therefore, that the churchyard of St. John's hospital should be used " for the poor only who died in the house ". While remaining free to make whatever arrangements they wished with " foreigners ", the nuns of St. Mary's agreed [2] not to persuade citizens to seek burial in their convent. If any parishioners of a city parish were buried there, " the chaplain of the said [parish] church should perform the obsequies in the house of the defunct and in the nuns' church, and the parish church should take two-thirds of the offerings and wax at the funeral ". St. John's and St. Werburgh's concluded an exactly similar agreement with the Dominican friars,[3] and it may be presumed that some such arrangements were also made with the Franciscans and the Carmelites.

Although we have no record of disputes about the operation of these agreements, they were full of debatable matter.[4] Significant in this connection is the rivalry between the several orders of friars, and the long-standing feud between the black monks and the Carmelites, of which we hear so much in the fifteenth-century records.[5]

In 1354 the abbot petitioned the Black Prince, " shewing that the lieutenant of Chester was causing his tenants to be arrested in the castle of Chester, until they had given the hospital of [St. Giles at] Boughton a share of their crops or other victuals, whereas neither they nor their predecessors nor their terre-tenants had ever been charged to make any contribution to the hospital ".[6] Such occasions of friction between overlapping franchises and more or less incompatible privileges were inevitable, and they were probably much more frequent than our very fragmentary evidence might, at first, suggest. At every turn, the layman was met by ecclesiastical exemptions from public obligations, and by ecclesiastical claims upon his property. From his christening to his last " bringing home ", he represented a potential source of revenue to rival religious organizations.

More spectacular than these petty rivalries, were the controversies over exemption from superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which involved the two greatest religious corporations of the city, the abbey and the collegiate church. They were also more conducive to the overthrow of all regular ecclesiastical discipline.

The struggle waged by the abbots of Chester for freedom from episcopal control was prolonged and bitter. This freedom was the goal of every

[1] Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. II, p. 299.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 300.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 301.
[4] Cf. the numerous disputes, over baptism and burial dues, quoted by Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, p. 84 *et seq.*
[5] *Morris*, p. 130.
[6] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 146.

ambitious monastery, partly from a natural esprit de corps which resented the intervention of seculars in the internal affairs of the house, and partly to escape from the heavy financial burden represented by episcopal procurations.[1] It was first obtained for St. Werburgh's by Abbot William de Bebington in 1344,[2] but was not easily to be retained. It was opposed by the Black Prince, as founder, and by the majority of the monks, who felt themselves thus exposed, with no protection nearer than Rome, to the tyrannous whim of an irresponsible abbot.[3] Subjected, no doubt, to royal and metropolitan pressure,[4] the house is said to have suffered many inconveniences and losses, on account of its exemption, a revocation of which was obtained from Rome by Abbot Thomas Newport in 1363.[5]

But such pretensions, once advanced by a powerful abbot, were not lightly to be abandoned. The exemption was again confirmed by Boniface IX in December, 1392.[6] Thereafter, although it was not always successfully upheld, it was asserted and reasserted by every abbot down to the proclamation of royal supremacy.[7] Assailed by bishop and archbishop,[8] it was a fruitful source of controversy, and two

[1] Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, p. 102.

[2] *Papal Petitions*, p. 82. The pope grants the petition of Abbot William Bebington, for freedom from archiepiscopal, episcopal and archidiaconal jurisdiction, and for an indult to the abbot and his successors for the use of the pastoral staff.

[3] In 1363, Newport alleged that his predecessor in claiming exemption had acted " without the knowledge or consent of the convent and of the founder, Edward, Prince of Wales ". (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 451.) On the death of Bebington, the monks bound themselves, before the election of his successor, to procure revocation of the exemption. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 354.) Cf. the comment of Jocelyn de Brakeland, referring to the similar exemption obtained by the abbot of Bury, in which he speaks of the " great peril [which] might spring from such liberty ; for if perchance we had some abbot who chose to squander the abbey goods and ill treat his brethren, there will be no person to whom the brethren could complain of the abbot's injustice ; for he will fear neither Bishop, nor Archbishop, nor Legate, and impunity will give boldness in delinquency." (Quoted by Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. IV, p. 549.)

[4] The archbishop is said to have intervened in the rule and administration of the house, during the abbacy of Bebington's successor, Richard de Seynesbury. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 354.)

[5] *C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 88.

[6] *C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 451. At the same time, Abbot Sutton obtained " the same indulgence as was granted by Clement VI and Innocent VI to the late abbots Bebington and Seynesbury " to meet the persecutions to which the exemption of the monastery exposed the abbot, by which they could not be suspended, interdicted, excommunicated, deposed nor fined . . . by any ordinary, official or minister.

[7] The abbey is described in the papal registers as immediately belonging to the Roman See in 1441 (*C.P.L.*, vol. IX, p. 235) and in 1455 (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 35), while Abbot Birchenshaw procured a further confirmation of its liberties from Leo X in 1524. (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. IV, pt. I, p. 232.)

[8] 22 Oct., 1400, Archbishop Arundel carried out a visitation of the house and forced Abbot Sutton to admit archiepiscopal, though not episcopal, jurisdiction. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 477.) In 1424–5, Chichele excommunicated Abbot Yerdesley

abbots, Yerdesley in 1424–5,[1] and Birchenshaw [2] in 1516, suffered excommunication in its defence. Nor was it a controversy remote from the religious interests of the laity. The exemption specifically included the parish church of St. Oswald,[3] and it is probable that if the claim to exemption had gone unchallenged, the abbot would have been able to ignore with impunity the episcopal objections to his appropriation of St. Mary's and St. Olaf's.[4]

The chapter of St. John's was not, of course, so ambitious. The dean's claim [5] to exercise archidiaconal authority, in the collegiate church and in the appropriated churches of St. Martin and St. Bridget, seems never to have been seriously challenged, and his right to appoint the sacristan (an important officer in the collegiate church, because of his responsibility for the discipline of the vicars and other inferior ministers),[6] without interference from the bishop, was definitely recognized in 1346.[7] The erection of the new bishopric, in 1541, seemed to threaten the independence of the canons, who hastened to procure an assurance that they were still subject to the more remote bishop of Lichfield,[8] but the subsequent dissolution of the college brought a speedy end to what might have proved an inflammatory situation.

A yet more radical cause of decay and disunity is to be found in the almost ceaseless internal rivalries which disabled these same foundations. The source of the trouble was the familiar one, poverty, or at least financial stringency, leading to mismanagement and corrupt administration, which was itself, in turn, the cause of fresh economic pressures.

The two instances of this familiar state of affairs with which we have to deal were not, of course, on all fours. The black monks could not plead that arid poverty which dictated the development of the collegiate foundation. In the wrangling of the canons and vicars, the

for failing to appear at Convocation on plea of an exemption for which he was unable to exhibit proofs. (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. III, p. 104.) He was however absolved within a few months. The archbishop's hand was strengthened by an act of 1401 (2 Hen. IV, cap. 3), which extended the act of provisors to cover papal grants of exemption of obedience.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] For contumacious behaviour in respect of a petition which the bishop of Lichfield had lodged against him in Rome. (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 390.)

[3] *Papal Petitions*, p. 82.

[4] See page 68.

[5] This authority was found to have been exercised " time out of mind " by an inquisition held in the church, July, 1318. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379.) Exemption from the jurisdiction of the archdeacon of Chester was confirmed in June, 1542. (Harl. 1967, f. 2.)

[6] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 41.

[7] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 118. Collegiate churches commonly sought to obtain as great a degree of independence from the bishop as possible. Cf. the bitter struggle between the chapter of Beverley and the archbishop of York. (Thompson, " Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons ", *Archaeological Journal*, vol. LXXIV, p. 175.)

[8] June, 1542. (Harl. 1967, f. 2.)

very survival of their church is the point at issue, while the monks strove rather for a larger share of creature comforts, and also, perhaps, for an improper relaxation of regular discipline.

Although we can say little of their history in detail, it is clear that St. Werburgh's was rent by bitter internal dissensions from almost the beginning of our period until the end, and by personal feuds which issued not infrequently in physical violence.[1] Thus, in 1362, three of the monks represented to the Black Prince "that by reason of a dispute lately arisen between them and their abbot, on account of notorious faults found in the latter, they dare not remain in the said abbey for fear of perpetual imprisonment or loss of their lives",[2] and they therefore appealed to him successfully for his protection. Subsequent events justified the alarm of the monks at the exemption obtained by their abbot. The greatly increased disorder which we notice in the early years of the fifteenth century was,[3] no doubt, attributable in part to this exemption. The allegations of robbery, so frequently bandied about between monks and abbot, suggest that the financial management of the house formed the real bone of contention.[4] It would appear that the efforts of successive abbots to secure to themselves an irresponsible control of the resources of the monastery lay at the root of the trouble.

When the bishop of Lichfield visited the abbey in December, 1315, he was met by complaints of the high-handed and dishonest conduct of the abbot. He therefore enjoined that in future all the ministers of the house were to be chosen in the chapter, according to ancient and good custom,[5] and that in future the abbot was to act in all great and

[1] e.g. the assault on Abbot Seynesbury in 1362 in which two future abbots, Thomas Newport and William Mershton, were implicated. (*Morris*, p. 126.) *c.* 1410, several monks were alleged to have threatened to murder the abbot. (*Ibid.*, p. 128.) As late as 1538, one of the monks was bound over in the Mayor's Court for an assault upon the prior. (*Burne*, p. 31.)

[2] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 441.

[3] *Morris*, pp. 128, 129 etc.

[4] e.g. Yerdesley and another monk were alleged to have stolen £100 from Abbot Sutton in 1407. In 1410, they broke into the abbot's chamber, forced his chests, and took away 20 marks and three gold rings. In 1431, when Yerdesley himself was abbot, similar allegations were made against his successor, John Salghall. (*Ibid.*, pp. 128, 129.) While these events are, of course, a sorry reflection of the spirit of indiscipline then prevalent in St. Werburgh's, it is almost incredible that these two men could ever have been elected to the abbacy if their "crimes" had been simply naked theft. It is much more likely that they represent lawless interludes in a longstanding financial dispute between the abbot and the convent.

[5] Although appointment of obedientiaries in any other fashion was specifically forbidden by the Benedictine Rule, similar complaints are frequently to be met with in monastic visitations. For examples, at the episcopal visitation of Peterborough in 1518, it was alleged that "the Prior was not elected by the community as he should have been" (Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. IV, p. 581), and in the same year a similar complaint was made against the prior of Ramsey. (*Ibid.*, p. 585.)

difficult matters with the advice of the "*maior et sanior pars*" of the convent. The abbot, who had been himself in charge of the fabric fund, was apparently suspected of diverting some of it to his own "*mensa*", and new arrangements for its custody were now to be made. Two of the most worthy brethren, the prior and the cellarer, were appointed to be the abbot's coadjutors.[1] Archbishop Arundel took similar steps, after a metropolitan visitation of the abbey in October, 1400.[2] The abbot was to make a complete disclosure of all debts, and was not in the future to transact any grave business, without the knowledge and consent of the convent.

The constitution of St. John's, while it bears obvious resemblances to similar foundations elsewhere, represents an early stage in the development of the collegiate church. Throughout its history, most of its prebends continued to be bursal, that is to say simply money shares of a common fund, an arrangement which was becoming unusual by the end of the thirteenth century for a church of this size and importance. There was, too, only one dignitary in the chapter—the dean himself.[3]

The resources of the college, mismanaged as they were by the proxies of the absentee dean and canons, were, in the fourteenth century, scarcely sufficient for the upkeep of the fabric and the orderly maintenance of divine service. The middle years of that century witnessed a prolonged contest between the dean and his chapter over the proper apportionment between them of their very limited and diminishing income.

The key to the whole lamentable situation was the frequent absence of the dean. It is evident, from the tenor of all the visitations made in this century, that he was hardly ever present. His spiritual functions were performed by his vicar and by the sacristan,[4] but his responsibility for the administration of the church's finances was usually delegated to a proxy, who was not always even a clerk.[5] As most of the canons, too, appeared solely by proxy, the door was opened to a policy of naked exploitation of the collegiate resources, a policy which was all the more disastrous because the church was largely dependent upon the financial support of the devout public, which was alienated by the chapter's disregard of its spiritual duties.

The peculiar glory of the collegiate church was its Holy Rood. It

[1] Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 53a. [2] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, ff. 477, 483.

[3] The seven prebends in Beverley Minster, for example, were in their origin charges upon a common stock. In the church of Westbury-on-Trym, the common fund gave place to separate prebends, about the middle of the thirteenth century. (Thompson, "Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons", *Archaeological Journal*, vol. LXXIV, p. 164.)

[4] And by the vicars of the canons of the 5th & 6th prebends. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380. *C.P.L.*, vol. VII, p. 282.)

[5] This is implied by the injunction of 1331, that the dean's proxy was to be a clerk. (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 41.)

was reputed a piece of the true Cross, which had been discovered by Helen, the mother of Constantine, and a number of miraculous cures and other wonders were attributed to its agency. It was a shrine of considerable local importance, noted throughout Cheshire, Lancashire and North Wales as " the Crucifix of Chester ", and a centre of pilgrimage which has been noticed by one modern author in conjunction with the renowned Rood of Bromholme.[1] It occurs frequently in contemporary wills, and was obviously a source of no mean fame and profit to the church, until about 1541, when it fell a victim to reforming zeal, and ended its days—so the story goes—as a whipping block in the grammar school.[2]

The income of the college may be distinguished under three heads. First, there was the glebe, the profits of which were divided equally between the dean and the canons of the fifth and sixth prebends,[3] and the greater tithes of the parish of St. John which were annexed to the deanery.[4] Second, there was the offering to the Rood and the " alterage " of the parish of St. John. These offerings were very considerable in the early fourteenth century amounting probably to more than £50 per annum. It was from this fund that the stipends of the vicars and the commons of the canons residentiary, if any, were paid, and the remainder was supposed to be evenly distributed every week among the dean and canons. Lastly, the appropriated churches and chapels of Guilden Sutton, Overchurch, Farndon, Shocklach and Holt, together with those of St. Bridget, St. Martin and St. Chad, in Chester itself, constituted a further source

[1] Cutts, *Parish Priests and their People*, p. 309.

[2] In the Taxatio of 1291, St. John's appears only as the Church of Holy Cross. The dedication of the church occurs in 1310 as " of Holy Cross and St. John ". (Harl. 2099, p. 21.) The Crucifix of Chester was the subject of five Welsh odes attributed to Gruffyd ap Maraddud, who was writing in the latter half of the fourteenth century. There is a translation of these poems by Mr. Gwynn Jones in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXII, p. 37 *et seq.* A timely visit to this relic seems to have restored the poet's health. The Welsh seem to have had an especial reverence for this cross. Thus, in 1278, certain Welshmen were obliged to take an oath upon it, that they would not bear arms against Edward I. (*Rymer*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 562, quoted *Morris*, p. 168.) 1467, Dame Cecilia de Torbok left " the rynge that is on my fyngr " to the Rood of Chester. Nicholas Southworth, an old servant of King Edward IV, who was buried at Windsor, left £20, " for the Rood at Seint Johnes in Chester ", 1489. Alderman Ralph Davenport, 1505, bequeathed " five large candles of wax to the college church of St. John, before the image of the Crucifixion ". Richard Hawarden of Winwick in Lancashire left in his will, dated March, 1503, 6*s.* 8*d.* to anyone who would go for him to the Holy Rood at St. John's Chester.

[3] This arrangement appears in the *Valor* of 1535 (vol. V, p. 202) and in the inquisition of 1318 (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380).

[4] This was certainly the case in 1535. (*Valor, loc. cit.*) These tithes are not specifically noticed in any earlier document, and may have gone into the common fund in 1318, but the high valuation of the deanery in the fourteenth century makes this seem unlikely.

of revenue, the profits from which, according to an inquisition held in 1318,[1] were to be annually divided among those members of the chapter, who had been resident during the past year, an arrangement very similar to those adopted in secular cathedrals to encourage residence.

The glebe of the college was never the subject of debate. So far as is known, the dean and the canons of the fifth and sixth prebends, were always able to divide its profits unchallenged and to administer the property without reference to the rest of the chapter.[2] It was the remaining revenues which were the subject of dispute between the dean and the chapter, a dispute which turned upon three main issues: the proper allocation of the monies in the "pix"—as the collection box which stood before the Rood was usually called—the scale of remuneration for resident canons, and lastly the whole question of the uses to which the profits of the appropriated churches were to be devoted.

The system of frequent—they were supposed to be weekly—distributions of the offerings among the members of the chapter or their proxies was very open to abuse, and a ready occasion of wrangling. The bishop's injunction, on the occasion of his visitation in November, 1331, that the money from the "pix" should be openly divided by the dean's proxy in the presence of all the canons or their proxies, is a clear indication that allegations of fraud had been made.[3]

The proper scale of commons due to residentiary canons seems to have been in constant question. It was the subject of one of the questions in the inquisition of 1318, of an episcopal injunction in 1346,[4] and of another in 1353.[5] In spite of their inconsiderable value, payments of commons sometimes fell badly into arrears in the fourteenth century.[6]

The controversy over the appropriated churches was much more serious. The determination of the absentee canons that their incomes from the foundation should not be diminished, however much the total revenue might decline, had reduced the church in the first half of the fourteenth century to the verge of complete ruin. By 1348, the fabric itself was in danger of collapse.[7] Even more serious, was the neglect

[1] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.

[2] There are, for example, among the Randle Holme MSS., "an indenture of 2nd May, 1544, whereby Richard Walker, clerk, dean of St. John's and David Pole, LLD and James Fouler, prebendaries of the fifth and sixth prebends, did let to William Bird, tanner, land for 64 years" (Harl. 2150, f. 229), and another similar instrument, dated 6 Nov., 1544, in which the three dignitaries demise, "a mease place standing without the Barres". (Harl. 2045, f. 20.)

[3] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 41.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. III, f. 118.

[5] *Ibid.*, f. 133.

[6] Cf. the case of John Cravene. In July, 1356, he had been constantly resident during the past four years and had received none of the commons due to him. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, f. 227.)

[7] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 112.

of divine service and of the cure of souls in the parish. The vicars' commons of 1½*d.* per diem represented the barest pittance. They received no other emoluments, and their wages were so irregularly paid that they began to absent themselves from the church for lengthy periods. When they were all present, they were too few in number for the proper ordering of the services. The ornaments and vestments of the church were likewise insufficient, and in a disgracefully neglected condition. The episcopal visitation, already noticed, of July, 1348, seems to mark the nadir of this process, but much the same story is told in a whole series of visitations.

It was, therefore, the bishop's constant task, in his relations with this chapter, to divert a reasonable proportion of its meagre resources from the pockets of the canons to essential expenditure in the church itself. In November, 1331,[1] Bishop Roger de Northburg enjoined that a part of the offerings of the Rood was to be set aside for the purchase of new vestments and ornaments. In 1346,[2] he directed that the vicars' stipends were to be increased by ½*d.* per diem and that four choristers were to be appointed to assist them in singing the offices. Each of these necessary reforms, if carried out, would have meant, of course, a decrease in the value of the prebends. They were not, therefore, carried out. In 1348,[3] Bishop Roger felt driven to more positive action. He enjoined that the incomes of the dean and canons should be limited for the next ten years to sixteen marks per annum, and that each newly installed member of the chapter should contribute 40*s.* to the cost of providing new vestments and ornaments. The money saved by these economies was to be devoted to the maintenance of the fabric and the services, by a committee consisting of the locum tenens of the dean, any canon who might be resident, the eight vicars, and, most significantly, eight faithful and industrious parishioners. The committee was to answer for its administration to the dean and chapter, at least once or twice a year. In 1353, further injunctions had become necessary. The vicars were henceforth to receive their commons of 2*d.* per diem regularly every quarter from the dean, under pain of a fine of 40*s.* to be devoted to the fabric. The offerings in the " pix " for three days in every year were to be given to the fabric fund, " according to ancient and good custom ", and during those days the keys of the " pix " were to be in the hands of the master of the works.[4] Archbishop Arundel, after a metropolitan visitation in 1400, issued another mandate in the following year for an augmentation of the vicars' stipends.[5]

It seems to have been this external pressure, acting to reduce still further their declining incomes, which provoked the fiercest dissensions

[1] Lich Reg., vol. III, f. 41.
[2] *Ibid.*, f. 118.
[3] *Ibid.*, f. 112.
[4] *Ibid.*, f. 133.
[5] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 484.

within the chapter. We have seen already that, according to the inquisition of 1318, the stipends of the vicars were to be paid out of the offerings to the Rood, and that the profits of the appropriated churches were to have been divided annually among the residentiaries. This system had broken down. Payments to the vicars sometimes ceased for months at a time. It was natural in view of the decline in the number of residentiary canons and of the increasing demands made upon the "pix" money for the dean, John Marsh, to attempt to make new dispositions. By an arrangement, which obtained episcopal confirmation in April, 1347, the oblations and small tithes of the churches and chapels of Farndon, Shocklach, Holt, St. Bridget and St. Martin, were in future to be earmarked for the payment of the vicars' stipends.[1]

The dean's action in this matter brought to a head the whole question of his right to dispose of the profits of the appropriated churches. There were, apparently, two or three residentiary canons at this date. They asserted their right to these revenues, and appealed against the dean to the justice and chamberlain of Chester who seized the disputed tithes into the hands of the Black Prince.[2] The dean, for his part, also appealed to the prince, claiming that the churches in question and those also of Guilden Sutton, Overchurch and St. Chad in Chester were, and had been "time out of mind", annexed to the deanery.[3] A lawsuit followed which was still dragging on in 1354.[4]

In August, 1352, the prince was informed

> that owing to these disputes the . . . stipends and salaries of the residentiaries, vicars and other ministers, which ought to be paid out of the profits of the said church and chapels, were held back, so that for lack of them, the greater number of the ministers, who had nothing else to live on, must needs leave the place, whereby divine service would be hindered and abated to the displeasure of God and the great shame of the said church.

He thereupon directed the chamberlain of Chester to make suitable arrangements for the payment of the canons residentiary and vicars.[5] It is curious, incidentally, that we hear so much at the height of this crisis about residentiary canons, as it is clear from the wording of earlier visitations that there were frequently none in the church. Probably a number of them appeared on the scene only when their interests seemed

[1] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 132.

[2] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 74–5. The canons made further representations to the effect that "the church and chapels mentioned are all appropriated to them, as appears by the muniments of their feoffees, which made no mention of the dean or deanery, and give no title to the dean, and that by ordinance and statute of their church, the tithes and profits of the said church and chapels ought to be collected by a canon residentiary, chosen and sworn for the purpose, and that the charges thereof ought to be done and paid by him and the balance of his account divided among the canons residentiary at the end of the year, and that they have always been in peaceful possession thereof until the present dean molested them". (*Ibid.*)

[3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 152. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

to be threatened, and it is possible that some of them could claim the allowance of a residentiary only on the basis of a very loose interpretation of the word.

Marsh withdrew from the conflict in 1353 by exchanging his deanery for the archdeaconry of Stafford, but his successor Richard de Burmyngham renewed the attack with fresh vigour. In March, the following year, the prince received information that Richard had " usurped " the revenues of the appropriated churches, " so that the country has for a long time been ill served and still is ", and again ordered his officers to intervene to ensure the proper maintenance of divine service.[1] Even worse was to come. No doubt Richard was made to feel unwanted in Chester, and in July he exchanged with Hugh de Thrikyngham for the rectory of Irnham. In 1355, another lawsuit was provoked by the arrival on the scene of a certain Alexander de Dalby,[2] who claimed to be dean, by virtue of a papal provision. The reader may well imagine the actual condition of the college during these years of tumult.

The course of the dean's protracted struggle with the chapter cannot be described, but it looks as though he won a qualified victory. In November, 1397,[3] John Leyot obtained the king's ratification of his estate as " dean of the collegiate church of St. John, Chester, with the churches of Pleymondestowe, Upton and Farnedon and the chapels of Shoglagehelt with other members and appurtenances belonging to the deanery ". This would leave to the control of the chapter only the church of Guilden Sutton and the appropriated city churches. But this is not the end of the story. There is reason to believe that the chapter had recovered control of, at least, the church of Farndon by the middle of the fifteenth century,[4] and, by the time of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, only Plemstall was appropriated to the deanery.

The petty canon was also a party to this dispute. In May, 1352, the Black Prince was informed that William Trusthorp, the cantarist, " had long sued by process of ecclesiastical law in the court of Canterbury, for his full share as a canon (. . . in the revenues of the collegiate church) and had had sentence given in his favour by the said court ".[5] Two years later, his successor, Adam de Wigan, complained to the prince that the revenues of the chantry were improperly withheld on account of the suit then in progress between the dean and the chapter.[6]

The financial position of the vicars gradually but steadily improved throughout our period.[7] The state of affairs which prevailed in 1318

[1] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 152.

[2] See page 125.

[3] *Cal. Pat., 1396–99*, p. 248.

[4] In 1449 this rectory was leased to John Dutton of Hatton by the dean and chapter of St. John's. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 743 n.) Leases contracted in Richard II's reign mention only the dean. (*Ibid.*)

[5] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 64.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

[7] See page 13.

was very favourable to the canons, especially to such of them as fulfilled the statutory requirements of residence. Perhaps these arrangements reflect the conditions obtaining during a still earlier phase of the church's history, a phase in which residence, on the part of the canons, was by no means so uncommon as it subsequently became. The circumstances of the fourteenth century, which saw the whole responsibility for the services of the church devolve upon the miserably paid vicars, rendered some redistribution of income essential if complete disaster was to be avoided.

These fourteenth-century conflicts have been described at some length, because they go far to suggest the subsequent course of development, in the fifteenth century, throughout which the internal history of the collegiate church is almost a complete blank. Our next complete picture of the situation after 1400 is that to be derived from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, which was compiled in 1535. The *Valor* reveals a state of affairs by no means unfavourable to the vicars. By this date, their stipends from the common fund were actually greater than those of the ordinary canons. Nor did that fund constitute their sole source of revenue. They also possessed, in the sixteenth century, considerable corporate property, consisting largely of tenements in the city, which were demised to tenants at an annual rent, and which were administered on behalf of the whole body of vicars by elected officers. There is positive proof that some of these tenements were bequeathed to the vicars, on condition that they celebrated an obit on the anniversary of the testator's death. From the fact that these lands were commonly called " obit lands ", and the officers who administered them the " masters of obits ", it would seem at least very probable that they were all acquired in this way. The list of obit rents in the survey of 1548 is a lengthy one, comprising some forty more or less small items, the total income derived from them amounting to some £17 per annum.[1]

The closing years of the church's history were to witness one further

[1] P.R.O., Rentals & Surveys, 6/24. In Harl. 2099, f. 70, there is an indenture dated 20th May, 7 Henry VIII (1515), between Thomas Bateman, sacristan, and Richard Hamnet, vicar choral, masters of obits of the vicars of St. John's on the one part, and George Lightfoot of Chester, butcher, on the other, in which the vicars demise to George, a tenement and garden with all appurtenances in Cow Lane, at 6*s.* per annum. One of the items in the list of obit rents, in 1548, is 6*s.* from George Lightfote, fee farm of one tenement and one garden with appurtenances in Cow Lane, to hold for ever by indenture of May, 1515, quite obviously the indenture just quoted.

In 1505, Alderman Ralph Davenport left a shop in Northgate Street to the vicars and to the priest of the chantry of Peter Thornton, in St. John's, " that they in choral vestments may observe a solemn *obite cum exequiis* in the feast of the Holy Mother Mary and a solemn mass on the morrow for my soul &c ". Again we find, among the obit rents, an item of 3*s.* 4*d.* " from the heirs of Ralph Davenport for a certain obit ". Other items are—2*s.* from Stephen Byllyngton & Robert Chamberleyn from the issues of a shop for a certain obit. 4*s.* from John Southworth from the issues of a certain obit there.

manifestation of old rivalries. Sometime in 1538, probably, Cromwell, as vicar-general, issued a commission to Bishop Roland Lee for ordering the college church of St. John's Chester; "the number of ministers there being excessive, the offering being withdrawn". The bishop wrote to Cromwell, in February, 1539, telling him that, "There is now a convenient number, two conducts, four vicars choral and four chantry priests". It would seem that the Rood was taken down, either at the time of this "ordering" or not long before it, and that its removal represented a serious financial loss to the church. The bishop adds that "two of the ministers being discharged withdrew certain plate and obtained a letter from you [i.e. Cromwell] to the chamberlain of Chester . . . surmising wrong to be illated [*sic*] to them by the dean and chapter which is not true".[1] There is good reason to think that these ministers were Peter Brereton, the petty canon, and Thomas Wermyncham, his assistant.

At any rate, Brereton had made a complaint to the court of requests, alleging that Wermyncham had been unlawfully dismissed "without any cause or grounde reasonable", and that a sum of £3 0*s*. 8*d*. per annum was being wrongfully withheld from himself. He explained that "the deane of the said collegiate church with other the mynysters of the same church of their covetoys and perverse mynds obteyned a commysion by colour whereof they had" perpetrated these wrongs. The court made out an order to the dean and chapter to show cause why they should not meet the demands of the two chaplains, and it was probably this order which provoked the bishop's letter to Cromwell.[2] We do not know exactly what the outcome was, but the "petty canonry" was finally suppressed a few years later.

The new arrangement while it lasted was a very satisfactory one for the four remaining vicars. We find them, at the dissolution of the college, in receipt of £11 each per annum, a stipend which contrasts very favourably with that of the two better paid canons (£8 per annum), and even with those of the rectors of St. Peter and Holy Trinity.[3]

It is not, of course, suggested that the vicars were ever anything but very poorly paid until the "ordering" of 1539. The story of this struggle does, however, suggest certain considerations of wider historical application. G. G. Coulton, in his survey of the *Last Days of Medieval Monachism*, rightly emphasizes the resilient character of ecclesiastical abuses. The instances relating to Chester quoted in this chapter and the next provide sufficient examples of that. Abuses have to be prohibited and reformed in every generation. Nor can the student of Chester object to Dr. Coulton's strictures on absentee incumbents. The absentee

[1] *Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 96, quoted in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 27.

[2] Court of Requests, Bundle 1, no. 96, quoted in *Cheshire Sheaf, loc. cit.*

[3] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314.

canons of St. John's were not, of course, idling away their time in luxurious dalliance—they were earning their money in offices at Westminster, and the monetary value of their prebends was in fact extremely modest—but as far as the collegiate church was concerned they were simply parasites who consumed the greater part of its meagre resources. What a detailed examination of the ecclesiastical affairs of Chester does suggest, however, is that attempts to remedy abuses were more frequent, more persistent and even, perhaps, more successful, than Dr. Coulton's readers might have expected.

Successive bishops of Lichfield, from Northburg to Roland Lee, never gave up their struggles for the rights of the vicars, and, what was more important, the rights of the parishioners. The inclusion of lay representatives on the "finance committee" of 1348 was a striking recognition of the parishioners' rights and interests in the collegiate church. Behind the bishop stood the secular power. The Black Prince followed closely every move in the struggle between the dean and his chapter. He was always ready to intervene and call a halt when the church's duty to the public appeared to be in need of a champion. It must be recognized that both he and the bishop faced that insuperable difficulty which confronted all medieval administrators, the difficulty of enforcing the law.

The attitude of the lay public, as far as we can discover it, is equally interesting. There is good reason to think that the permanent chantries in the church, the Chantry of the Virgin and the Thornton Chantry,[1] were deliberately constituted by their founders as a means of strengthening the staff of the collegiate church. The cantarists were, in fact, the equivalent of well-endowed perpetual vicars, whose stipends, moreover, could not be encroached upon in any way by the absentee chapter. They were themselves bound to reside, and must have become the principal ministers of the church, as far as its relations with the parishioners were concerned.

The anonymous public, too, which provided the offerings of the church, evinced like sympathies. The decline of offerings to the Rood, essentially the common fund of the canons, was coincident with the emergence and growth of the "obit rents", which represented, in fact, a common fund for the vicars.

The attitude of lay people to the church was, in other words, exactly what one might expect. While they lived in perpetual suspicion and rivalry of a rich and powerful corporation like that of the black monks, while they were indifferent to absentee, civil-servant, canons, they were certainly not anti-clerical. The poor and, no doubt, often poorly educated priest, who lived among them and offered them daily the comforts of religion, commonly earned their sympathy and respect, and not infrequently their affection.

[1] See page 164.

CHAPTER IV

GETTING AND SPENDING

The constitutional tensions which troubled the church in Chester and compromised her integrity in the eyes of many lay folk, were in the last analysis of economic origin. The activities of the church were not confined to her primary function, to redeem the world by prayer and by the celebration of the sacred mysteries. She possessed a great part of the surplus wealth of society. Within the broad limits of ecclesiastical polity, fell all the educational institutions of the community from the chantry school to the university, the care of the sick, the relief of the poor and the traveller : all those things, in short, which today constitute the social aspects of government. The fundamental problem which faced the medieval church in her efforts to renew her spiritual vitality, was how to make a just apportionment of her immense resources. If those efforts met with partial failure, it was because the church failed to convince lay society that she was fully prepared to shoulder the responsibilities entailed by her unique position of power and wealth.

In applying these wider considerations to local conditions we are reminded of a way in which the economic fortunes of ecclesiastical bodies were of more immediate consequence to their lay neighbours. The churches and religious houses of Chester owned much property in and near the city, and the fortunes of their numerous tenants were inextricably linked with their own.[1]

St. Werburgh's abbey was not only the largest house in the neighbourhood, it was also one of the wealthiest foundations in the country.[2]

[1] It should be noticed that even the lengthy account which follows does not include all the ecclesiastical property in the town. The bishop of Lichfield (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 243), the abbot of Conway (Selby, *Lancashire and Cheshire Records preserved in the Public Record Office*, vol. I, p. 106), the abbot of Whalley (Harl. 2060, ff. 316, 333), the prior of Birkenhead (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, Vol. XXXI, p. 47), the prior of Norton (*Dugdale*, vol. VI, p. 314), and the abbot of Combermere (P.R.O., Chancery inquisitions ad quod damnum, 223, No. 1) each possessed several messuages there. The property of Vale Royal abbey included a house and thirteen shops in Chester. (*The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey*, ed. J. Brownbill, p. 131.) 40 acres in Overleigh belonged to the abbey of Basingwerk (Harl. 1967, f. 4), and the prior of Wenlock claimed the right to keep a boat upon the Dee. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXI, p. 15.)

[2] Savine (*English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution*) calculates from the *Valor* that only one-fifth of the English monasteries possessed a gross temporal income of £300 or more. If spiritual incomes are also taken into consideration, only some twenty abbeys of the very first rank enjoyed larger revenues than St. Werburgh's. (Cf. the list of net revenues, abstracted from the *Valor*, in Tanner, *Notitia Monastica*, p. 1 *et seq.*)

It held considerably more property within the city than any other church or convent,[1] and beyond this, its lands in the neighbourhood, at Shotwick, Upton, Ince, Elton, Wervin and Backford to the north, in Boughton and Christleton to the east, in Saighton, Huntington and Waverton to the south, formed almost a complete circle around the city. Their properties at Sutton, Neston, Bromborough and elsewhere made the black monks the greatest landowners in the Wirral peninsula, while in the east of the county they held smaller, but not inconsiderable, possessions, in the neighbourhood of Barnshaw and Goostrey. Further afield, they held the great manor of Weston-on-Trent, with its appurtenances, in Derbyshire. The monks made no important territorial acquisitions in our period, and this is not surprising. It was an age of falling land values, and few of the great religious houses were then seeking to extend their estates.[2]

In the great days of the thirteenth century, the monks of St. Werburgh's had been actively engaged in the cultivation of wide lands. While, of course, they had numerous freehold and copyhold tenants, demesne agriculture had been the basis of their economy. They had been in those days the model farmers of the region, mighty fellers of timber, who steadily pushed back the frontiers between the waste and the sown. Especially in the forest of Wirral, do we find them making assarts and " fresh ploughings ", even after the Black Death.[3] We find them, also, claiming the labour services of their tenants, even on the distant and isolated manor of Weston.[4]

Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, however, under the pressure of the agricultural depression, they began to change their methods. It is dangerous to attach too much importance in this connection to the pestilence of 1348,[5] but it should be remarked that the grave labour shortage which followed that disaster was specifically mentioned by the monks as one of the main causes of their financial difficulties.[6] The monks of St. Werburgh's reacted to these difficulties, as did most of the great landholders of the period, by turning arable lands into pasture, and by leasing a considerable proportion of their

[1] Its rents and farms in Chester amounted, at the dissolution, to about £67 per annum. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 274.)

[2] " In the last two centuries of the middle ages, the monks tended to invest money in plate and ornament, rather than in land." (Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p. 13.)

[3] Cf. *Hewitt*, p. 13. *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, pp. 717 and 83.

[4] Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. I, p. 150. In 1356 there was a serious riot at Weston apparently arising out of a dispute between the monks and their tenants there. (*Cal. Pat., 1354–8*, pp. 286 and 297.)

[5] Dr. Wood-Legh has shown that the Black Death was not frequently cited as a prime cause of monastic difficulties. (*Church Life in England*, p. 18.)

[6] See page 77.

demesne. The manor of Weston was thus alienated at the close of the fourteenth century.[1]

It is not possible, on the basis of available evidence, to trace out this process in detail, but it is clear from the survey made by the royal commissioners after the dissolution of the house,[2] that the black monks had become rentiers rather than landholders in their latter days. The demesne of 1540 seems to have consisted only of the manors of Huntington[3] and Sutton and a number of holdings in the suburbs. A large part even of the manor of Sutton had fallen into the hands of farmers, and as for the remainder, we hear more of pastures—in "Huntington park", in Bache and in the "cellerar's meadow", near Stonebridge—than of arable.[4] It is most unlikely that so large a proportion of the abbey's estates had been thus alienated for any great length of time and we know that Abbot Birchenshaw, in the last years of his rule, was hard pressed on all hands to alienate the abbey manors to influential laymen. The manors of Sutton and Ince were certainly lost in this way, and Birchenshaw was forced to protest to Cromwell that, if the manor of Huntington followed them, it would be impossible to maintain the hospitality of the house.[5] At present, it is not possible to define, more certainly than this, the extent of the abbey's demesnes in the sixteenth century, but a careful scrutiny of the *Valor* and the dissolution survey makes it clear that "rents and farms" accounted for the bulk of their temporal revenues, even before the onset of their time of troubles.

None of the other religious bodies held properties remotely comparable in extent to those of St. Werburgh's. Next in order, though far behind, comes the convent of St. Mary's.[6] The annual value of the nuns' temporalities was calculated to be £47 14*s.* 0*d.* in 1535, as compared with the corresponding total of £751 for the abbey. The figure in the *Valor* seems, however, to be an underestimate, and must be taken as a minimum. A careful comparison of this survey with other available documents[7] makes it almost certain that the nuns' income from this source amounted

[1] Leased for twelve years to the bishop of Durham, July, 1418. (*Cal. Clos., 1413–19*, p. 518.)

[2] *Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 391.

[3] Which Dr. Legh had recently secured for himself on a long lease at very favourable terms. (*Ibid.*)

[4] *Ibid.* In 1512 the hospital of St. John leased to the abbot 30 acres of pasture in Huntington Park. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. I, p. 37.)

[5] *Burne*, p. 20 *et seq.*

[6] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 206. The figure given in the text is the total of rents, etc., not counting the pension from the earl of Chester.

[7] These are: (1) An account of the lands and possessions of the late nuns within the city of Chester, for the year 32–3 Henry VIII. This account is summarized by *Ormerod* (vol. I, p. 348), and has been examined in full by the present writer. (P.R.O., Min. Acc. 7385.) (2) Account Book of the receiver of lands late of the nunnery, 1 Mary. (P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/25.) (3) An almost complete series of annual account rolls presented by the steward of the nunnery, from 22 Ed. IV to the dissolution. (P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, Rolls. 99, etc.)

to about £60 in an average year. The largest single item in this total was one of £25 (another approximate figure) for rents of houses and tenements within the city. The nuns held houses and gardens in Fleshmonger's Lane,[1] Northgate Street, Watergate Street, Cupping Lane, Nuns' Lane,[2] Bridge Street, Eastgate Street, Foregate Street, Claverton Lane [3] and St. John's Lane: that is to say in every street and parish in the city. In addition, the nuns drew rents amounting to about £7 per annum from houses and lands in Handbridge,[4] the southern suburb of Chester, and a yearly income of £10 from lands in the adjoining hamlet of Lache.[5] The remainder, say £18 per annum, was derived from a large number of small scattered properties, including "wich houses", in Middlewich, Nantwich and Northwich, and rents and tenements in Christleton, Neston, Mancote, Wharton, Harwarden, Davenham, Thornton Hough and elsewhere.[6]

As the nuns' properties were so small and widely scattered, it is not surprising to find that some of their thirteenth-century lands do not appear in the sixteenth century,[7] and that there have been a number of new acquisitions. During the fourteenth century, a number of sales or exchanges seem to have taken place. The policy of the nuns, if they had one in these transactions, seems to have been the natural one of consolidating their possessions in the neighbourhood of the house. Edward I allowed them to acquire certain lands "beyond the Dee near to Chester", in exchange for other lands of theirs near Vale Royal, which he gave to that abbey at its foundation.[8] In 1360, they exchanged their manor of Wallerscoat and a bovate of land in Shurlach for 87 acres of land in Lache and Marleston.[9] All new accessions of land, whether by gift or purchase, which are noticed in this century, are located in the Handbridge neighbourhood.

Most nunneries, even very small ones, retained in their own hands a

[1] The present Newgate Street.

[2] So called, it may be presumed, from the circumstances of their owning most of the houses in it. The number of their tenants here is variously estimated from 25 (P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, Roll 119, printed by Fergusson Irvine in *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XIII, pp. 105–9) to 36. (P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys 6/25.)

[3] Now Duke Street.

[4] *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 348.

[5] *Valor, loc. cit.* The difference between this figure and the £15, given for demesne lands in Min. Acc. 7385, is accounted for by the lease of the site of the convent itself for £5 per annum.

[6] *Valor, loc. cit.* P.R.O., Min. Acc., 7385. *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 384.

[7] Besides the manor of Wallerscoat (see below), we notice, for example, certain lands in Blacon granted to the nuns by Randle de Mainwaringe, between 1208–29 (Harl. 2099, f. 40), and still held by them in the reign of Edward II. (*Ibid.*)

[8] *Dugdale*, vol. IV, p. 312 n.

[9] This manor had been granted to the convent in frankalmoign by Earl Randle Blundeville *c.* 1185. (Inspeximus of 1400: *Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 303, *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 396.)

demesne "farm" for the provision of the needs of the house.[1] The nuns of Chester certainly did so in the fourteenth century, when we find them taking their corn to be ground at Dee Mills. If they still retained any of their demesne in their own hands, a hundred years later, it was only a very small part of it. By 1483, at least, the greater part of their lands in Lache and Handbridge had passed into the hands of a large number of small tenants paying an annual rent.[2] They held a large pasture in Lache at farm from the abbot and convent of Basingwerk,[3] but probably this land, too, was in the possession of tenants. As far as their more scattered properties were concerned, the nuns must always have been mere rent-collectors.

House property in the city was, of course, a most convenient form of investment for a small women's house of this type, and it is not surprising to find that at least half their rents derived from this source in the sixteenth century. There is good reason to believe that they had converted some of their lands in the county into town rents during the course of the fifteenth century.[4]

Landed property accounted for an even smaller part of the revenues of the collegiate church. We have seen that, from the outset of our period, the dean and two of the canons divided between them the profits of the glebe, or "prebends lands". It is recorded in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* that they each received £6 13*s*. 4*d*. from this source.[5] It

[1] Jacka, p. 147.

[2] It is clear from the long series of account rolls, beginning in 1483 (see above, page 61, note 7), that no important changes in the character of the nuns' revenues occurred between that date and the dissolution of the house. To take, for example, Roll 119, printed by Mr. Irvine (all these accounts are substantially the same), we find at least 18 tenant-holdings in the Handbridge area, a typical holding consisting of one or two "lands" and a "croft". It appears, from Min. Acc. 7385 and from a farm of the nuns' lands to William Brereton, Aug., 1541 (Harl. 1967, f. 2), that their possessions in Handbridge, Lache and Marleston amounted in all to about 148 acres, 61 of which are described as arable, and the remainder as meadow or pasture. The total of £10 given in the *Valor* for Lache is clearly made up entirely of rents due from tenants. Unfortunately, the headings under which the rents appear in the rolls are variable and difficult to interpret, and it is equally difficult to equate items of revenue in the *Valor* with corresponding items in Min. Acc. 7385. The writer is almost certain that all the nuns' demesne was in the hands of tenants, but for these reasons he hesitates to be dogmatic.

[3] At least from 1535. Min. Acc. 7385 shows that the payment of £3 6*s*. 8*d*. per annum made by the nuns to the abbey of Basingwerk, and noticed in the *Valor*, in that year, was the rent for 61 acres of pasture.

[4] There is little notice in the "inspeximus" of 1400 (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 296 *et seq.*) of property in Chester itself. On the other hand, this document indicates that the nuns then held greater properties in the three "wiches" than they did at the dissolution, in addition to the other lost lands noticed above.

[5] Vol. V, p. 203. It was, doubtless, to this glebe that the king's agents, Layton and Legh, were referring when they noted, in their "compendium compertorum", that the rents of the college amounted to £20. (*Letters & Papers of Hen. VIII*, vol. X, p. 142.)

consisted of nearly one hundred small holdings, variously described as " crofts ", " meadows ", or so many " selions ", scattered about the three town fields, Chesterfield, Spitalfield and Bankfield.[1] Their extent is impossible to determine, but can hardly have been less than sixty or seventy acres, and was probably considerably more. The total income from these holdings is given as £20 16*s.* 4*d.* in 1548.[2] In addition to this glebe, the college possessed a number of small rents in Chester, which are listed, in the post-dissolution surveys, as " resolved rents " and " reparacion lands ". Their total value was small, about £3, and they are not separately noticed in the *Valor*, being probably a part of the common fund of the chapter.[3]

There is no good reason to believe that there had been any significant change, during our period, in the character or value of these revenues. By contrast, the " obit rents ", belonging to the vicars of the collegiate church, were largely accumulated as the result of testamentary bequests made during the fifteenth century. According to the 1548 survey, they comprised some forty or more small items, all of them houses and gardens in various parts of the city, demised to tenants at annual rents, and bringing in revenues of some £17 per annum.[4]

If there was any increase in the extent of church property in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it is largely to be accounted for by the generous endowment of the two religious fraternities, which rose, in the latter half of the period, to considerable prominence in the social and religious life of the city. The more important was that of St. Anne,[5] which was associated with St. John's, possessing at first an altar within the church,[6] and later a chapel in " Vicars' Lane ".[7] Already in existence

[1] P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24. The survey made in 1548, shortly after the possessions of the college had passed into the King's hands.

[2] *Ibid.* It cannot now be discovered how the responsible official arrived at this total, but it appears to be, at least roughly, correct, and is thus in agreement with our other evidence. The total of £12 18*s.* 6*d.* given in the minister's accounts of 4 Ed. VI (quoted *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314), for the " rents called the prebends' lands ", and that of 118*s.* given in the account of crown revenues in Cheshire, 1559–60 (this account, which is in the possession of the Chester and North Wales Archaeological Society, has been printed as a serial in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vols. 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26), represent the rapid fall in the value of the crown's holdings caused by the sweeping alienations made for lump sums by the Court of Augmentations in Edward's reign. It would appear, from the survey of 1548, that about two-thirds of this land was arable.

[3] One cannot, however, help suspecting that there is an all-round underestimate of values in the *Valor*.

[4] P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24.

[5] The full invocation was to " The Holy Trinity, the Assumption of the Blessed Mary and Anne, her Mother ". (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 409.)

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24, includes " a messuage or tenement called Seynt Annes house with all chambers, outbuildings, gardens, and appurtenances ". A contributor to the *Cheshire Sheaf* (Third Series, vol. II, p. 54) says that this chapel stood " where the entrance gates to the park now are ".

in 1361,[1] it was refounded in 1393, numbering many wealthy and influential citizens among its members. In March of the latter year, it was granted a licence to acquire in mortmain, lands, tenements and rents to the value of £20.[2] The acquisition, under its terms, of property worth £5 per annum was ratified in November, 1396,[3] and a further £10 per annum had been added by November, 1410.[4] The steady flow of small grants and bequests continued throughout the first half of the fifteenth century. In the reign of Henry IV, it would appear that the annual income of the fraternity was usually in the neighbourhood of £20,[5] but an extent of 21–2 Ed. IV gives a total of about £35.[6] In the 1548 survey, made after the dissolution of the fraternity, its former properties were valued at £39 5*s.* 10*d.* Apart from some £6 from "field rents",[7] this total was made up from the rents of "messuages" and "tenements" in the city. The fraternity was, in fact, a greater owner of house property than St. Mary's convent. The list of its possessions includes nineteen messuages in Foregate Street, eleven in Cow Lane, thirteen in Northgate Street, and six or seven in Eastgate Street.

Less important, from the economic point of view, was the Guild or Fraternity of St. George, whose guild chapel was in the church of St. Peter.[8] Less is known in detail of its history, but it was probably similar to that of the larger organization. It, too, originated about the beginning of the fifteenth century, and derived most of its income from testamentary bequests invested in small properties in the town.[9] In 1548, they were estimated to be worth £10 2*s.* 0*d.* per annum.[10]

The properties of the hospital of St. John without the Northgate are described in an inquiry of 1316, and in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, which shows that there had been no substantial change in them since the

[1] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 409.

[2] *Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 248. It would seem that the fraternity already possessed an income of about £13 per annum. (*Black Prince's Register, loc. cit.*)

[3] *Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 35.

[4] *Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 242.

[5] P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, Roll. 890.

[6] *Ibid.*, Roll 891. On the same roll are a series of very abbreviated annual accounts for the years 5–19 Ed. IV. These give totals of between £4 and £5, but probably this represented a favourable balance after all or part of the year's expenses had been met.

[7] "A place in Newton, a messuage in Hoole, a close or pasture called St. Anne's Haye" and 8 other items, "closes" or "parcels of land", in the town fields.

[8] Harl. 2150, f. 248a, quoted in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. 21, p. 62.

[9] Cf. a grant of the Court of Augmentations, July, 1550 (*Cal. Pat., 1549–51*, p. 411), of "the late fraternity of St. George within Chester and the messuages, tenements, houses, buildings, gardens, shops, &c. in the several tenures (of 10 persons named) in Brydestrete, Watergate Strete, Northgate Strete, Estgate Strete, Gosnalde Lane, Bache Strete Lane and Goose Lane, . . . and all other possessions in these streets and lanes."

[10] P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24.

earlier date.[1] Again, we find that the bulk of the rents are derived from property in the city. Rents from such property amounted in 1535 to £14 14*s*. per annum, as compared to £5 4*s*. 6*d*. from rents in Boughton, Nantwich, Pensby, Blacon and Allerton, in Lancashire.

This lengthy catalogue demonstrates the importance of religious bodies in the life of the city. Their prosperity was closely bound to that of the city as a whole, and, as we trace their varying economic fortunes, we shall do well to remember that they involved the homes and the shops and the lands of several hundred Chester people.

The monks, the nuns and the canons of St. John's were not, of course, dependent solely upon their lands and rents, and their "spiritual" endowments were perhaps of even greater significance from the point of view of the social and religious historian.

The practice of granting advowsons to the religious had sprung from the feeling that they were better fitted than lay landholders for the responsible exercise of ecclesiastical patronage. Even in earlier centuries, however, the doubtful wisdom of this practice had been growing apparent, and throughout our period the spiritual evil which resulted from the appropriation of parochial revenues by the religious was one of the staple grievances of would-be reformers. It was frequently alleged, even by such orthodox critics as Gascoigne, that monks had seized greedily upon the richest parish churches and had proceeded, by the endowment of a perpetual vicarage, to divert the greater part of their revenues into the monastic coffers. The vicars, it was said, were very generally endowed with the barest living wage, and thus forced by dire poverty into a mercenary attitude to their vocation.

An examination of the situation in Chester goes far to uphold the strictures of contemporaries and of such modern critics of the medieval church as Dr. Coulton. In the days of their early popularity with the earl of Chester and his barons, the black monks of St. Werburgh's had acquired the advowsons, not only of St. Mary's, St. Oswald's, St. Olaf's and St. Peter's in Chester, but of seventeen other parish churches in Cheshire,[2] the churches of Weston, Aston, and Morley in Derbyshire, of Denford in Northamptonshire, and of Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire.[3] By the end of the thirteenth century, the abbey had appropriated five of these, including the very large and outstandingly rich parishes of

[1] Stewart-Brown, "The Hospital of St. John the Baptist", *Hist. Soc. Lancs & Ches.*, vol. LXXV, pp. 94 and 95.

[2] Prestbury, Neston, Shotwick, Ince, Bromborough, Church Lawton, Doddleston, Waverton, Christleton, Wallasey, West Kirby, Astbury, Thurstaston, Northenden, Coddington, Tattenhall and Bebington. The churches of Holywell and Dyserth had been lost in the thirteenth century, together with most of the abbey property in North Wales.

[3] Tait, *Chartulary*, *passim*. The church of Denford was granted in mortmain by the abbot to the bishop of Chichester in 1394. (*Cal. Pat.*, *1391–6*, p. 516.)

St. Oswald and Prestbury. In the two poorest, Ince and Shotwick, no vicarage seems ever to have been established, and in the others the vicar was not generously endowed. In no case did the monks appropriate to themselves less than three-quarters of the parochial revenues.[1] At the same time, the black monks had secured for themselves a pension, of at least a few shillings, but in one case as much as £5, from every one of the rectories in their gift which they had not then appropriated, and none of these pensions was relinquished during our period.[2]

In 1291, however, a number of rich abbey livings remained unappropriated. One of them, the church of Chipping Camden in Gloucestershire, was appropriated in 1340,[3] and, as the financial difficulties of the abbey became more oppressive, the black monks began to adopt a more ruthless attitude towards their spiritual possessions. The improvident abbot, Henry Sutton (1387–1413), seems to have tried to augment his dwindling revenues by a policy of wholesale appropriation. A series of attempts had already been made to appropriate St. Mary's on the Hill, but it was Sutton who actually accomplished the appropriation in 1392 or 3.[4] In January, 1394, the rectory of St. Olaf's was united to the former parish on the grounds of poverty.[5] The abbot obtained a licence to appropriate the church of Astbury in 1394,[6] and those of Aston and Weston on Trent in Derbyshire in 1395.[7] These were by far the richest livings not already appropriated, but the black monks were not yet satisfied. Like many other communities about this time,[8] they then sought to overthrow the perpetual vicarages in their gift, and to provide

[1] According to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, the vicarage of Neston was worth £12 18*s.* 4*d.* (vol. V, p. 213) and the appropriated revenues £36 9*s.* 8*d.* (*ibid.*, p. 205), the vicarage of Prestbury £10 (*ibid.*, p. 215) and the appropriated revenues £100 (*ibid.*, p. 205). The vicarage of St. Oswald's was worth £9 19*s.* 10*d.* (*ibid.*, p. 208), while the monks' share in the church amounted to £72 12*s.* 6*d.* (*ibid.*, p. 205).

[2] This appears from the *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 273.) Certain of the poorer churches concerned, including St. Peter's and St. Olaf's, did not appear in this record because they were valued at less than 6 marks per annum and not liable to be taxed, but we know from other evidence that St. Peter's did, in fact, contribute a pension to the abbey (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 392), and it is likely that the others did. The *Taxatio* gives £15 4*s.* 8*d.* as the total of these pensions. This is sufficiently close to the *Valor* figure, £14 4*s.* 11*d.*, to make it clear that no significant change had occurred since 1291. The pension due from St. Mary's-on-the-Hill occurs as £2 13*s.* 4*d.* both in the *Taxtio* and in the dissolution survey (*Dugdale*, *loc. cit.*), although it does not occur in the *Valor*.

[3] *C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 166.

[4] See appendix, page 174.

[5] Lich. Reg., vol. VI, p. 101. It is here distinctly stated that, at this date, St. Mary's was appropriated to the abbey and served by a vicar or perpetual chaplain.

[6] *C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 532.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] This policy was a common one in the late fourteenth century. In 1403, an act of Parliament, which remained a dead letter, ordered that in every appropriated church a perpetual secular vicar should be appointed, and that no monk should be made vicar in any church so appropriated. (Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, pp. 79 and 80.)

stipendiary chaplains for the cure of souls. They secured papal licences to suppress the vicarages of St. Oswald's and St. Mary's in Chester, together with those of Prestbury, Astbury, Bromborough, Aston and Weston.[1] In the space of five years they had obtained permission to appropriate the total revenues of five rectories and three vicarages—the most valuable churches, of course, on which they could lay their hands —and proposed to consign the parishioners of eight parishes to the tender mercies of wretchedly underpaid stipendiary chaplains. The disastrous spiritual effects of such a policy can only be fully appreciated if it is remembered that these parishes were all of considerable extent, while those of Bromborough, Prestbury and St. Oswald were very large indeed, and included within their boundaries a number of chapels of ease, which had also, somehow, to be provided for.

The king might confirm these arrangements in May, 1397,[2] but it is clear that the ordinary ecclesiastical authorities were not happy about this situation, and it was not long permitted to continue. The turning point in the contest appears to have been Sutton's submission to Archbishop Arundel in October, 1400. The bishop of Lichfield, who had resisted the earlier attempts to appropriate St. Mary's,[3] was no doubt responsible for the revocation of that appropriation in December, 1402, but the fact that the next rector of St. Olaf's [4] was presented by Arundel suggests that the union of the two churches had been dissolved on the initiative of the metropolitan. Exactly what happened in the cases of St. Oswald's and Prestbury does not appear; if the two vicarages had been suppressed, they were re-established, although perhaps with smaller endowments. The church of Astbury [5] was never, in fact, appropriated, and probably those of Aston and Weston did not long continue to be so, but the extensive parish of Eastham and Bromborough was to be served only by stipendiary priests until the dissolution.[6] It should be remarked that the arrangements made in the endowment of the abbey's vicarages were in some respects different from those commonly adopted. It was usual for all the great tithes, beyond the small pension allocated to the vicar, to go to the corporate rector and all the small tithes and oblations to the vicar,[7] but the vicar of St. Oswald, for example, shared with the monks of St. Werburgh's all three divisions of the parochial revenues. In 1535,[8] he enjoyed besides a small glebe, a very modest share in the great tithes, but, on the other hand, the abbey retained not only the lion's share of the great tithes, but a similar proportion of the small tithes, and even of the offerings. It will be readily appreciated

[1] In 1397. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 136.)
[2] *Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 136.
[3] See appendix, page 174.
[4] See appendix, page 177.
[5] *Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 25.
[6] In the sixteenth century, he was being paid only £4 6*s.* 8*d.* per annum. (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 393.)
[7] Gasquet, *Medieval Parish Life*, p. 16.
[8] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 208.

that this arrangement was less favourable to the vicar than the usual one, and something like it is to be found in all the appropriated churches of St. Werburgh's.

The extent of the monks' dependence upon their spiritual revenues is clearly expressed in the figures of the *Valor*.[1] The gross temporalities amount to £751 9*s*. 1½*d*., as compared with a total for spiritualities of £352 12*s*. 2*d*. That is to say, nearly one-third of the abbey's revenues was derived from appropriated parochial tithes, and the proportion would undoubtedly have been much larger if the black monks' eagerness to augment their resources in this way had not been held in check by episcopal opposition.

The spiritual revenues of the nunnery were similarly proportionate to its temporalities, amounting, in the sixteenth century, to about £30 per annum out of a total income of about £116.[2] The nuns, however, had never shown the same avidity to acquire such revenues as had the black monks. They had possessed the church of Over, near Winsford, since the days of the Norman earls.[3] In 1362, the Black Prince granted them the church of Llangathen, and, in 1365, the chapel of Llangharnyn, both in Carmarthenshire. In November, 1388, " in consideration of their poverty ", the king added the churches of Llanbeblig and Carnarvon, in Carnarvonshire.[4] All these churches and chapels were appropriated by the nuns as soon as they came into their hands. On the other hand, the vicarages were more generously endowed than those of the abbey. In the sixteenth century, the vicar of Llangathen received about a quarter of the total revenue [5] and the vicar of Over [6] almost half, while the " vicar " of Carnarvon paid the nuns only a pension of £3 per annum out of a gross income of £20.[7]

[1] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 205.

[2] The *Valor* gives the value of the priory as £98 16*s*. 2*d*., but a comparison with the documents noticed on page 61, note 7, indicates that £116 is probably a nearer estimate of the gross income. The total of spiritualities was made up as follows : churches in North Wales, £3, churches in South Wales, £17 6*s*. 8*d*., Over, £8 13*s*. 4*d*., a pension from the church of Budworth, 10*s*., a pension from the church of Handley, 13*s*. 4*d*. The figures for Over and Carnarvon are taken from Min. Acc. 7385. They are larger than those given in the *Valor*, but the nunnery account rolls (e.g. Roll 105) prove that 7385 is correct, and that we have here yet another case of underestimation in the *Valor*. The *Valor* does not notice the Handley pension at all, but, again, the account rolls show that it was regularly received. The chapel of Budworth in the Frith was a daughter church of the parish of Over.

[3] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 185.

[4] Cf. the inspeximus of 1400. (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 303.) The parish church of Sutterby, Lincolnshire, was granted to the nuns by the bishop of Lincoln in 1219 (*Reg. Welles*, vol. II, p. 95) and we find them presenting in 1286, 1298 and 1299 (*Reg. Sutton*, vol. I, pp. 81, 226, vol. II, p. 296), but they seem to have lost the advowson not long after the latter date.

[5] The vicarage was worth £6 13*s*. 4*d*. (*Valor*, vol. IV, p. 411.)

[6] The vicarage of Over was worth £7 4*s*. 0*d*. (*Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 214.)

[7] *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 421.

The great bulk of the revenues of St. John's were spiritualities. Indeed, in 1291, the canons were able to claim that they possessed no temporalities at all.[1] In 1318, the rectories of Farndon, Guilden Sutton and Upton were annexed to the college with their subordinate chapels, while, within Chester itself, the canons held the churches or chapels of St. Bridget, St. Martin and St. Chad.[2] In 1349, Sir Peter le Rutter, the lord of the manor of Thornton-le-Moors, gave the advowson of the church of Stoke to augment the collegiate church,[3] and in 1382 the church of Plemstall was transferred to St. John's by the abbot and convent of Shrewsbury.[4] Only in the case of Plemstall, did the bishop ordain a vicarage,[5] all the other churches and chapels being served either by stipendiary chaplains or by the vicars of the college. In 1535, the college drew from these churches an annual revenue of £63 14*s.* 6*d.* The tithes and offerings of the collegiate church itself then amounted to £7 16*s.* 8*d.*, but, of course, the greatest single item of income was the offering to the Rood, which amounted to £50 in an average year.[6]

The financial history of these foundations, in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, is one of continuous distress. The fortunes of St. Werburgh's had been mixed during the thirteenth century, and the visitations of 1315 and 1323 reveal the abbey seriously encumbered with debt.[7] Thenceforward, the abbey staggered from one financial crisis to another, until about 1440. The chapter of St. John's was constantly faced with a grinding struggle to maintain the fabric and services of the church on grossly inadequate resources, and of it we hear nothing but complaint. The fabric was seriously decayed. In 1348, there was imminent danger that the tower would collapse from want of repair. In 1412, a papal indulgence was issued on behalf of St. John's because it was "threatened with ruin",[8] and, in 1415, the canons obtained licence from the crown to collect alms by themselves or their proxies for the repair and rebuilding of the church and college.[9]

[1] *Taxatio*, p. 258. This was, of course, strictly true, since the "prebends' lands" were, in fact, the church glebe.

[2] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379. [3] Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 126.

[4] *Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 116. For what consideration does not appear.

[5] But not immediately! The church was appropriated in Oct., 1393, but the bishop then granted "that the church should be served by a stipendiary and resident priest as chaplain to be appointed and removed by the dean", and this arrangement received papal confirmation in 1396. (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 533.) It was not until April, 1403, that the bishop of Lichfield ordained a vicarage. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 184.) The vicar was to receive a salary of 10 marks per annum, (not 40 marks as Ormerod erroneously says, vol. II, p. 808), and a competent manse with a garden. The rector, i.e. the dean of St. John's, was to be responsible for the maintenance of the chancel. [6] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 203.

[7] Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 53; vol. III, f. 36. In 1351, it was said that their possessions hardly sufficed for the small number of monks then serving God there. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 18.)

[8] *C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 302. [9] *Cal. Pat., 1413–16*, p. 285.

The nunnery, too, was always in difficulties. As early as 1253, the convent wrote to Queen Eleanor, begging her to confirm the election of a prioress " to their miserable convent, amidst its multiple desolations, . . . so greatly were they reduced that they were compelled every day to beg abroad their food, slight as it was "—a statement which can hardly be literally true of ladies of their rank and connections.[1] In a visitation of 1331,[2] the bishop found that the goods of the house were hardly sufficient to maintain the nuns already there, and forbade the prioress to admit any more without his licence, while, in 1388, it was stated that the nuns " had but a half-penny a day each for their pittances, besides bread and ale ".[3]

The fate of these foundations was not a matter of indifference to the secular power. Dr. Coulton has emphasized the important part played by the lay " advocate ", even at this late date, in many parts of Europe,[4] in supervising the foundations in his charge. The founder of a house, and his kin, usually felt that they had the right and the duty to ensure that the services which they had endowed were properly maintained, and that their ancestors were not defrauded of the prayers due to them. In fourteenth-century England, as a result of escheats and forfeitures, the heir of the founder was very commonly the king.[5] The fact that English monastic life was preserved from the worst excesses of indiscipline too often met with on the continent, was due, in no small measure, to the strength of the English crown, and to the king's readiness to intervene in the internal affairs of monasteries and colleges whenever a serious breakdown of order threatened.[6] In Chester, the crown was in a particularly strong position, since the king, or the prince of Wales, as earl of Chester, was the patron of the abbey, the priory, the hospital of St. John and the Dominican convent.

The earl's interest was further strengthened by the circumstance that alms from the exchequer of Chester constituted an important source of revenue to all these houses. The black monks were in receipt of £19 10*s.* 0*d.* annually from the exchequer,[7] the nuns £12 12*s.* 2*d.*, the

[1] Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, p. 172, quoting Wood, *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies*, vol. I, p. 35.

[2] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 40.

[3] *Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 530.

[4] In *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. IV, especially chapter XLVII.

[5] This is an important point, because by the time of Edward III, at least, had become the established rule that the king could only intervene in the affairs of churches which were in royal patronage. (Wood-Legh, *Church Life in England*, p. 5.)

[6] Thus Edward III issued commissions of enquiry in respect of thirty-six monasteries, and most of these enquiries were followed by the appointment of custodians and a grant of special protection. (*Ibid.*)

[7] This sum was made up as follows: 10*s.* ancient alms for providing a light in the chapel of Hilbre, first granted by John Scot, earl of Chester, in 1296; £15 for the tithe of the fishing of Dee Bridge and for the tithe of the farm of the city, granted

largest single item in their modest revenues,[1] the hospital £4 11*s.* 0*d.*[2] The Dominican friars, too, were largely supported from the same source.[3]

Our knowledge of the internal affairs of St. Werburgh's is largely derived from a long history of royal intervention. The Black Prince had exerted all his influence against the abbot's struggle for exemption. It was at his instigation that the abbey was visited in 1362,[4] during the first period of exemption, by the commissaries of the Benedictine general chapter, and as a result of this visitation Abbot Seynesbury was forced to resign, despite his influential office as one of the provincial presidents of his order.[5] Again, in March, 1400,[6] the king issued a protection to the Benedictine visitors, and no doubt his attitude goes far to explain Abbot Sutton's meek capitulation to Archbishop Arundel later in the year.

Three times, the abbey was seized into the earl's hands: in 1362, after the resignation of Seynesbury, "in consideration of the damage and loss which had befallen the said house by the bad government . . . of the late abbot";[7] in June, 1415, "because of gross and long continued mismanagement";[8] again in July, 1437, "by reason of its having been wasted by misrule."[9] The custodians in 1362 were John de Delves, lieutenant of the justice of Chester, and Thomas de Okley, one of the monks, and similar arrangements for the actual management of the house were probably made in the later years by the royal custodians who were

by Earl Randle II; £4 recompense for certain tithes at Frodsham relinquished by the abbot of St. Werburgh to the abbot of Vale Royal at the request of Edward I. (Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. I, p. 71; *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. VII, pp. 43, 70.)

[1] Made up as follows: ancient alms, £16; compensation for the tithe of the church of Over (this must have been a part of the tithe not the whole), £4 17*s.* 0*d.*; for 4 acres in Godesbache, resigned to the abbey of Vale Royal at the king's request, 10*s.* Compensation for the tithes of Bradford and Little Over, in the parish of Over, also assigned to Vale Royal, 15*s.* 2*d.* (Harl. 2064, f. 268.)

[2] Stewart-Brown, "Hospital of St. John the Baptist", *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 94.

[3] £8 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum. (Palmer, "The Black Friars of Chester", *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 97.) The leper hospital of Boughton also received a grant of 20*s.* per annum out of the exchequer. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 352.)

[4] In Jan. of that year, he wrote a letter to the abbot of St. Albans, one of the provincial presidents of the Benedictines, requesting him to visit St. Werburgh's. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 438.)

[5] *Pantin*, vol. III, pp. 34 and 35.

[6] *Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 248.

[7] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 444.

[8] *Cal. Pat., 1413–16*, p. 353. It was placed in the keeping of the bishop of Winchester.

[9] *Cal. Pat. 1436–41*, p. 76. The custodians then appointed were the bishop of Bath and Wells, then chancellor, and Humphrey, earl of Stafford. The abbot and convent were to be exempt from being sued for annuities, corrodies, pensions or debts, to be quit of all pleas, except pleas of dower and *quare impedit*, assizes of *novel disseisin* and *darein presentment*, and attaints and actions summoned before the justices in eyre.

of too great consideration to perform their duties in person. The custodians on such occasions were endowed with full powers over the financial affairs of the house, and seizure by the crown was usually accompanied by a grant of royal protection to the convent which amounted, very often, to a repudiation of the accumulated debt.

Nor did the nunnery and the hospital, small though they were, escape such attentions. In 1267, the master of the hospital of Denwall is found acting as warden of the nunnery,[1] and in September, 1353, the Black Prince granted a special protection to the house.[2]

The hospital of St. John's appears to have had an uneventful, and presumably prosperous, history in the thirteenth century, but troubles developed early in the fourteenth. The wardenship was in the earl's gift, and was nearly always assigned, in the fourteenth century, to officers of the royal administration in Chester, who seldom found time to interest themselves in its affairs.[3] The warden was removed in 1311, as the result of a report that he had so impoverished the house as to impair its hospitality and works of mercy, and a few years later, in 1316, the hospital was placed in the custody of the prior of Birkenhead. The new arrangement did not prove satisfactory, and, in 1341, the hospital was taken into the earl's hands, and a new warden appointed. In June, 1400, the properties of the hospital were again seized into the king's hands by the mayor and the escheator of Chester. At each of these crises an elaborate enquiry was made into the rights, duties and possessions of the hospital, and some attempt made to recover alienated revenues.[4]

Of particular interest, in this connection, is the Black Prince's intervention in the stormy affairs of St. John's college. He took action to ensure the payment of the vicars in 1352, not on the basis of any claim to be the "advocate" of the collegiate church, but on simple grounds

[1] F. Irvine, "The Nunnery of St. Mary", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XIII (1907), p. 79.

[2] Dr. Wood-Legh notices a number of occasions on which such protection was granted to distressed houses, for which custodians were not appointed—the Cistercian monastery of Newminster, the priory of Tynemouth and the priory of Dunmow were the houses concerned. (*Church Life in England*, p. 25.)

[3] After 1400, the warden seems to have been nearly always an undistinguished local chaplain, who was presumably resident.

[4] There is a very full account of the hospital's varied fortunes by R. Stewart-Brown (*Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 66 *et seq.*), from which all the information in the text is derived. "1365, order and strict injunction to the justice of Chester and the mayor—on information that the lands, rents and services of the hospital of St. John, are concealed and withheld to the disherison of the prince and the said hospital, to find by an inquisition taken by the oath of men within and without the city what lands, rents and services pertain to the said hospital, whether any are concealed or withheld and if so by whom and for how long and of what value they are." (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 478.)

of public interest, " lest divine service should be hindered . . . to the displeasure of God and the great shame of the said church ".[1] Two years later, he issued an order to the justice of Chester on behalf of the cantarist of the Blessed Virgin, which deserves to be quoted at some length. The prince had been informed that

> Richard de Bermyngham, dean of the said collegiate church, in order to support a plea which he had brought against his canons, had usurped for himself the goods of the said chantry, which ought to go to the upkeep of the two chaplains, . . . as well as all the other goods of the collegiate church, so that the county had for a long time been ill served, and still was, and the salaries of the chaplains and the other charges were withheld, which thing the prince, as superior lord of the founders and patrons of the chantry, could not and would not suffer, especially at that time, when the lands of the said founders were in his hands by way of wardship.

The justice was therefore charged to compel the dean to make good all arrears due to the cantarist, or " in case he (the dean), would not do so, . . . to seize (the revenues of the chantry) into the prince's hands, and find the chaplains' salaries and all other charges pertaining to the chantry."[2] Here again, the prince comes forward, not only as the representative of the founder, but also as the protector of the spiritual interests of the public at large.

The earl's role in the religious affairs of the city was not limited to such intervention in times of crisis. He supported the nuns in their defence of their liberties against the city, and protected the abbey from the rapacious demands for hospitality made on it by the gentry of the neighbourhood.[3] He was also prepared to give occasional financial assistance to the poorer houses. The nuns, especially, were often the recipients of his charity. Their Welsh churches seem to have been granted to them by the Black Prince, and, when they were temporarily lost to the convent as a result of Owen Glendower's revolt, the king made good a part of the loss by the grant of ten marks annually from the fee-farm of Shrewsbury, which was continued until at least 1447.[4]

In September, 1353, the Black Prince made ag rant of £6 13*s*. 4*d*. to the hospital of St. John, £3 6*s*. 8*d*. to the leper asylum of St. Giles at Boughton, and £6 13*s*. 4*d*. each to the nuns and the three orders of friars, out of the last sessions of his justices of trailbaston.[5] More common

[1] See page 54.

[2] March, 1354. *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 152.

[3] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 18. Cf. a clause in the first Statute of Westminster, by which it was decreed that none save the patron should be entertained in a religious house except at the invitation of its head.

[4] This grant was first made 12th May, 1400, for twenty years. (*Cal. Pat., 1413–16*, p. 110.) It was renewed for a further ten years in May, 1421 (*Cal. Pat. 1416–22*, p. 368), for another ten, in Feb., 1431 (*Cal. Pat., 1429–36*, p. 106), and again, for seven years, in Oct., 1440 (*Cal. Pat., 1436–41*, p. 477).

[5] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 115.

than such grants of money were grants of timber from the earl's forests, which seem to have been made to the college, the hospital and the priory, whenever extensive repairs to the fabric were on foot.[1] In 1400, the nuns were granted 10 loads of fuel from Lloydcoyd wood, annually for ever,[2] and similar assistance was given to the abbey in 1442.[3]

The earl's charity was not entirely disinterested, and he sometimes expected a more tangible reward than the prayers of its beneficiaries. Thus, he occasionally nominated clients for admission to St. John's, or to the leper hospital,[4] and the abbot sometimes received requests from royalty which it would have been impolitic to disregard. In 1352, for example, the Black Prince wrote on behalf of Joan of Assheleye, who was burdened with young children and had nothing to live on, requesting the monks to grant her a corrody or livery for life.[5] The installation of a woman with young children within the precincts was not a contribution to the maintenance of monastic discipline, and this was probably not the only occasion on which the monks were obliged to entertain such unbidden guests.

In the period after 1440, we hear less of serious financial disorders, but this may be attributed, in part at least, to the paucity of our documentary evidence for these years, and also, no doubt, to the relaxation, during the civil wars, of the crown's surveillance of monastic finances. Our scanty evidence suggests that there may have been some improvement in the finances of the abbey, but the position of the lesser foundations seems to have deteriorated since the previous century. In 1455, the nunnery was probably in a worse condition than at any other time in its history. The convent was then said to have suffered ruinous dilapidations in temporal and spiritual goods ; the church and the other

[1] April, 1353, two oaks fit for timber from Delamere forest, to the warden of the hospital, " towards the repair of the defects of the hospital ". (*Ibid.*, p. 93.) March, 1362, six oaks from the park of Peckforton to St. Mary's. (*Ibid.*, p. 441.) Dec., 1394, two oaks for the nuns from the royal park of Shotwick, " for the repair of their house and church". (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 347.) 1412, eight oaks from the forest of Delamere, and four from Shotwick Park, to the dean and chapter of St. John's for the repair of the church. (C.R.R., 14 Hen. IV and Hen. V, m. 1d (2 and 3), in Appendix II to *The Thirty-sixth Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 104.) Sept., 1358, order to the lieutenant of the justice of Chester from the prince to deliver an oak fit for timber in the prince's forest of La Mare to the parishioners of the Church of St. Mary on the Hill, of the prince's alms. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 318.)

[2] *Ormerod, loc. cit.*, quoting C.R.R.

[3] C.R.R. 20 and 21, Hen. VI, m. 3d. (6), in Appendix II to *The Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 779.

[4] In 1399, the king addressed an order to the warden of St. John's for the admission of Alice Downhead, whom he had nominated as one of the poor sisters of the hospital. (Stewart-Brown, " The Hospital of St. John the Baptist ", *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 70.) *Morris* (p. 157) quotes a number of similar nominations for admission to St. Giles.

[5] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 75.

buildings were in grave need of repair; even the food and clothing of the sisters were inadequate.[1] Ever since 1415, the benefices of the "*pauperes moniales Cestrie*" had been exempt from the payment of clerical subsidies. Similar exemption was accorded, in 1452, to the hospital of St. John, "by various causes impoverished and diminished", and to the collegiate church, in 1496.[2]

It was, of course, to the credit of the mendicant orders that they remained faithful to their profession of holy poverty, but the Chester convents were so poor that they had a hard struggle for survival. As early as 1400, the Carmelites complained in a petition to the Prince of Wales, "that they were so impoverished . . . that they could not serve God or live honestly without aid".[3] At the dissolution, all three friaries were burdened with debts two or three times greater than their average yearly incomes,[4] but it seems to have been the Franciscans who were reduced to the lowest condition. In the sixteenth century, their slender resources were no longer able to sustain the cost of repairs to their church, and they were obliged to concede, to the "merchants and sailors of Chester", the use of the nave and the aisles as a storage place for sails and other maritime equipment in return for an undertaking by that body to maintain the fabric.[5] The Carmelites, too, were forced to alienate the outbuildings and gardens adjacent to their convent.[6] The

[1] Bishop's commission to visit, April, 1455 (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 67), and the subsequent injunctions of the visitor, published in October of the following year. (*Ibid.*, f. 81.)

[2] Nuns, 1415 (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. III, p. 316). Thereafter they were regularly exempt, e.g. in 1430 (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 166), 1433 (*ibid.*, f. 170), 1435 (*ibid.*, f. 173), 1452 (*ibid.*, vol. XI, f. 48), 1455 (*ibid.*, vol. XI, f. 67), 1461 (*ibid.*, vol. XII, f. 129), 1462 (*ibid.*, f. 135), 1496 (*ibid.*, vol. XIII, f. 193). Hospital, 1452 (*ibid.*, vol. XI, f. 48), again in 1461 (*ibid.*, vol. XII, f. 129), etc., as for nuns. Collegiate church of St. John, 1496, on grounds of poverty. (*Ibid.*, vol. XIII, f. 193.)

[3] Bennett, "The White Friars of Chester", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, vol. XXXI, p. 16.

[4] The Grey friars' debts amounted to £12 8*s.* 11*d.* (*Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. XIII, pt. I, p. 476.) Black friars £15 16*s.* 4*d.*, their rents amounting to £5 6*s.* 8*d.* per year. (*Ibid.*) White friars £8 9*s.* 0*d.* (Bennett, *loc. cit.*, p. 26.) These debts are all the more significant in view of the fact that the three convents, in the weeks immediately preceding the dissolution, had demised most of their property at very long leases in exchange for cash down.

[5] The well-known agreement of 1528 (printed in *Morris*, p. 143) is usually referred to as a new arrangement, but the wording of the text makes it clear that it was merely the ratification of a more or less longstanding practice. "*Nos prefatos gardianum et conventum dedisse . . . ad predictorum merchatorum et nautarum perpetuum usum pro velis et aliis rebus necessariis ad naves suas pertinentibus componendis et reficiendis, quocienscunque opus fuerit, sicuti hactenus consueverint,*" etc.

[6] Thus, the receivers' account of their properties, in 1539, mentions a garden situated in Whitefriars lane, presumably adjoining the convent, leased for thirty years in 1524, two houses with a stone house, outside the convent, let, in 1530, for a hundred years, to William Goodman, a former mayor; an orchard in St. Martin's parish, let in 1513 for sixty years, and a garden on the north side of the said friary. (Bennett, *loc. cit.*)

surrender of the three houses, made in the summer of 1538 to the suffragan bishop of Dover, was said to have been made voluntarily " for very poverte ". Needless to say, this claim was not true, but it would probably not have been made unless it had been notorious that the friars were at the end of their financial tether.

To what causes are we to attribute this prolonged and general economic distress ? The black monks themselves, in 1394, attributed their difficulties to coastal erosion in Wirral of " the land from which they were wont to derive the greater part of their victuals ", and to an acute labour shortage, following the Black Death. " The rents and services which their tenants and serfs used to pay had been irrecoverably diminished and withdrawn under pretext of pestilence." [1] The dean of St. John's, in a papal petition of 1412,[2] claimed that " his deanery had sustained no small losses on account of the deadly wars which had raged between the English and the Welsh ". In their petition of 1400, the Carmelites spoke of " murrain, and a raid committed in the parts round about ".[3] Such great landowners as the monks of St. Werburgh's may well have suffered serious loss from the social upheavals of the late fourteenth century, and, while the prosperity of the whole region was threatened by the Welsh troubles, churches like St. John's and St. Mary's, which derived a large part of their revenues from tithes of parishes in Wales and the border country, were especially vulnerable. The civil disorders of the fifteenth century were more acute in Cheshire than in many other parts of the country, and the decay of the port's natural outlet to the sea was a grave added cause of depression. The general impoverishment of the neighbourhood must have resulted in a decline in the value of offerings and bequests which was especially serious for the parish churches and smaller religious houses. Again, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a fall in land values, and a steady rise in prices, which meant, of course, a decline in the real value of fixed money payments. The former development undermined the prosperity of monasteries like St. Werburgh's which owned vast estates, and the latter threatened the very existence of smaller foundations, like St. John's hospital and St. Mary's, which derived a large proportion of their income from fixed payments of one kind and another.

Setting aside more generalized complaints of poverty or financial distress, it is evident that there was, in fact, a decline in the revenues of all the Chester churches and convents. St. Werburgh's was said to be worth £1,333 (2,000 marks) per annum in 1396.[4] In 1449, it was valued at only £686 3*s.* 3*d.*, though whether this was the net or gross income does not appear.[5] By 1535, the figure had risen to £1,104 gross, £1,030 net.[6]

[1] *C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 533. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 270.
[3] Bennett, *loc. cit.*, p. 16. [4] *C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 532. [5] *Morris*, p. 138.
[6] Savine, *English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution*, p. 270.

The annual revenues of the collegiate church probably amounted to more than £250 at the opening of the thirteenth century. By 1393, they had been reduced to about £220, though now augmented by the appropriation of the church of Stoke which was worth about £30 per annum. In that year, addition was made of the church of Plemstall, of the net value of £26 13*s.* 4*d.*,[1] but in spite of this, the total income in the early years of the fifteenth century seems to have been little more than £100.[2]

These figures are conjectural, but the fact of declining income can be readily demonstrated with figures taken directly from contemporary documents. The deanery was worth less than 200 marks in 1393, but less than 100 in 1412.[3] The tithes of Farndon were worth £40 per annum in 1395,[4] £10 per annum in 1449,[5] after years of Welsh raids across the border, and about the same in 1535.[6] The tithes of Shocklach were worth £12 13*s.* 4*d.* in 1393,[7] but in 1535 they were valued, together with the glebe and oblations, at only £6.[8] The tithes of Stoke were valued at £20 per annum in 1385,[9] at £15 6*s.* 8*d.* a few years later,[10] and at £10 in 1535, together with the glebe, which was not included in the earlier estimates.[11] More serious was the decline in the offerings to the Rood, which constituted the basis of the collegiate finances. In 1535, these offerings amounted to £50 per annum.[12] They must have been worth nearer £70 in the mid-fourteenth century,[13] and yet we hear, even in those days, of a reduction of offerings.[14]

[1] The value of this church was then estimated at 50 marks, from which one must deduct the 10 marks with which the vicarage was endowed. (*C.P.L.*, IV, p. 533.)

[2] These figures, for the approximate total income of the collegiate church, have been arrived at from computations based on the figures given in the next paragraph for the value of individual items of income, and from the information, given in earlier chapters, on the value of the prebends' and the vicars' stipends. We have not got accurate information under all these heads for any one date except 1535, and a number of unknown factors are involved. For example, we cannot say with confidence precisely which items of revenue were included in the very generous estimate of the value of the deanery which is given in the text, and whether the stipends of all or some of the vicars, at that date, were regarded as a charge upon this " deanery ". The writer has sought to keep his estimates as low as possible, because the evidence is conclusive on the poverty-stricken condition of the college. Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales*, p. 327, give the income of the collegiate church in 1447 as £119, but they do not cite their authority for this precise figure and I am unable to suggest what it might be.

[3] See Chapter II, page 12. [4] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 743 n. [5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 201. The total value of the church is here given as £14.

[7] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 687. This parish, too, is on the Welsh border.

[8] *Valor, loc. cit.* [9] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 389. [10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Valor, loc. cit.* [12] *Ibid.*

[13] A rough estimate, arrived at from a comparison of the total income known to be derived from other sources, and the expenditure as represented by the value of the prebends, the residentiaries' common, and the stipends of the lesser ministers.

[14] Visitation of March, 1353, in Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 133.

As in the case of St. Werburgh's, there had been some recovery, by 1535, from the worst period of poverty, about a century earlier, a recovery which probably took place in Tudor times. It would appear from the *Valor* that, at that date, the gross annual income of the college was about £152.[1]

No comparative figures are available for the nunnery, but it is clear that the temporary loss of the Welsh churches represented a serious reduction of income. In the sixteenth century, it derived £18 [2] from this source out of a total of £116. The hospital of St. John suffered no permanent decline in income.[3] Again one gets the impression that the dire poverty of the mid-fifteenth century had been somewhat alleviated under the orderly government of the Tudors.

There was no sufficient economic reason for the constant troubles of St. Werburgh's. The monastery was richly endowed, and, if its income decreased in the fifteenth century, the decrease in the number of brethren was relatively almost as great. The absence of serious debt at the dissolution, after a generation of elaborate and expensive building activity, under abbots Ripley and Birchenshaw,[4] shows what could be done under energetic and competent administrators. On the other hand, sheer extravagance was not often an important factor in the situation. The bishop found that the monks were keeping a large number of unnecessary servants in 1315, and he clearly thought that Abbot Byrchehylle's luxurious mode of living was the principal cause of the debts which then encumbered the house,[5] but there is little to suggest that later visitors came to similar conclusions. The pack of hounds which the monks always kept [6] was, admittedly, an expensive luxury, but when the visitors disapproved of the monks' dress it was on moral rather than on financial grounds. It will be apparent, from the large revenues appropriated to the use of the cellarer and the kitchener, that these monks were not ascetic devotees, and the abbot's claim to quasi-episcopal rank entailed some ostentation. None of these considerations, however, go far to show that the monks were habitually living beyond their means.

Nor did alms consume a large part of their resources. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* makes an allowance for alms of £14, "to be distributed to the aged poor on Maundy Thursday (*in Cena Domini*) for the souls of the kings of England, (the) founders", not a heavy burden upon a house

[1] *Valor, loc. cit.* £160 would probably be nearer the true figure.

[2] *Valor*, vol. V, p. 206.

[3] See page 66.

[4] The debts only amounted to £100 in 1536. (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. X, p. 141.)

[5] Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 53. The visitor remarks that the abbot himself has too many personal servants. He is forbidden in the future to hold feasts, except at solemn festivals, the arrival of an important visitor, or other evident cause.

[6] These are mentioned adversely in every visitation.

with a net annual income of more than £1,000. The expenses of hospitality were clearly great in the fourteenth century, although not always cheerfully borne. Much of the monks' vaunted generosity to travellers [1] was of an involuntary character, as when they were obliged to find lodging for the servants and retainers of local gentry and royal officials.[2] The visitation records show that, even in the fourteenth century, there had been a marked decrease in the value of alms distributed to the poor.[3]

A much larger constant drain upon income was made up by the inevitable " overhead " expenses, entailed by the management of the monastery's extensive properties. In 1535, the abbey employed eleven bailiffs whose annual salaries amounted to £19. To this must be added the stipend of the auditor, and the pensions due to the earl of Derby and the earl of Shrewsbury, who were retained as the honorary stewards and protectors of the abbey's interests in Cheshire and Derbyshire respectively, to give a complete total of £31. It should be remembered that this represents the situation as it was when administrative costs had been cut to the bone by the leasing of almost all the demesne estates. Expenditure of this nature must have been much greater in earlier days.

Litigation is often cited as a common cause of monastic insolvency, and their legal battles with the citizens, with the bishop of Lichfield, and especially the several proceedings at Rome with regard to their claim to exemption were, perhaps, the greatest single cause of the monks' difficulties. To say this does not necessarily imply that they were grasping and improperly litigious. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were a golden age for lawyers, above all for ecclesiastical lawyers, and the black monks, with their extensive and diverse spiritual and temporal interests, could hardly avoid being involved in one law suit after another.

[1] Writing about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Lucian " wonders how the monks of Chester do not tire of their good humour. They are joyful to the men of the county, businesslike to travellers from afar . . . The seats about their table are worn by reason of the many meals given to strangers; such is their innate liberality . . . Here travellers to and from Ireland find rest, companionship and shelter while waiting for wind and tide." (*Liber Luciani, Lancs. & Ches. Rec. Soc.*, vol. LXIV, pp. 58 and 59, quoted *Hewitt*, p. 68.)

[2] April 11, 1351. Order to the justice on information that the abbeys of Chester, Vale Royal, Combermere and Dieulacres, which were founded and endowed by the prince's predecessors and are of his patronage, are so excessively burdened by the frequent visits of people of the county, with grooms, horses and greyhounds, and are so wrongfully annoyed and harassed in many other ways . . . to supervise the said abbeys well, so that no such visits and charges fall on them henceforth. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 18.)

[3] In 1323, the visitor notes a diminution of alms, which he attributes to excessive expenditure on the abbot's greyhounds. Some kind of fraud had been practised by the servants of the abbey in the distribution of alms. In 1400, Archbishop Arundel enjoined that the distribution of alms was to be kept up according to ancient and good custom.

The other great cause was almost certainly the monastic lust for building and more building on the grand scale. It was always difficult, even for the wealthiest bodies, to raise the ready money for extensive building operations, and a certain amount of indebtedness was inevitably incurred by such operations. The real trouble was that an ambitious abbot—Seynesbury is the outstanding example of this in the history of St. Werburgh's—too often embarked upon grandiose improvements which he found too expensive to bring to completion, thus creating serious problems for his successors. Abbot Seynesbury's reconstruction of the nave and the south transept had to wait more than a century before it was finished by another energetic abbot, Simon Ripley.[1]

These last remarks apply with even greater force to the collegiate church of St. John. The architectural design of this church was suited to its dignity as a cathedral, but it was never so endowed. The construction of the present church was begun soon after the conquest by Bishop Peter, but it was never finished. Interest in the work flagged when the second post-conquest bishop moved his seat to Coventry. The clerestory was built towards the end of the twelfth century, but more than another hundred years elapsed before the church reached its most complete condition. It has been plausibly suggested that much of the later trouble with the fabric was due to the lengthy exposure to the elements which was the inevitable accompaniment of this dilatory process. Whatever the cause, dilapidation began before construction ended, and no period of perfection intervened in the history of the fabric between the still incomplete and the ruinous.[2] St. John's was relatively well endowed compared with many other similar collegiate establishments,[3] but by the mid-fourteenth century its finances had proved quite inadequate for the maintenance of a church of such ambitious proportions, and, thereafter, the chapter was forced to exert every effort merely to prevent the fabric from deteriorating into complete ruin.

The nunnery, too, owed most of its difficulties to the sheer inadequacy of its endowments. Poor as were almost all women's houses in England, the income of Chester priory was in 1535 rather below the average.[4] In the sixteenth century, too, their finances were probably in a happier state than they had ever been before. In 1536, Layton and Legh reported debts of only £40, a trivial sum by the standards of monastic indebtedness.[5] Their income was then certainly greater than it had

[1] *Morris*, p. 132.

[2] Cooper Scott, *St. John the Baptist's*, pp. 13 and 15.

[3] Thompson, *Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons*, *passim*.

[4] All but sixteen nunneries were worth less than £200 per annum at this date, but the average value of the hundred women's houses which occur in the *Valor* is said to be £130. (Jacka, pp. 24 and 25.)

[5] *Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. X, p. 141. This is probably to be accounted for by an increased efficiency in administration. In the sixteenth century,

been during most of their history. It was only in the latter half of the fourteenth century that they acquired their Welsh churches, and when these churches were lost to them, a generation later, as a result of Glendover's revolt, about one third of their income derived from royal alms which were not always very regularly paid.[1] The nuns, indeed, gave little in alms, but they had little to give.

The wording of mandates to visit, not infrequently, implied culpable negligence or positive dishonesty on the part of the head of the house or the principal obedientiaries. There does seem to have been some fraudulent misuse of alms in the abbey in 1323,[2] and it may be true that Abbot Sutton absented himself from his abbey for long periods, as alleged in 1400.[3] It is also true that the dean of St. John's and the warden of the hospital were often irresponsible absentees, but sheer lack of business acumen was probably a more constant factor in the situation than corruption or inattention to duty.

The administration of St. Werburgh's was elaborated on lines familiar to the student of monastic finances. The abbot, of course, had his own mensa,[4] to which special revenues were annexed, and his financial affairs were strictly differentiated from those of the convent. Thus, when Abbot Birchenshaw was forced to resign his office by the royal visitor in 1538, he had to settle, out of his pension, debts of considerably more than £400, which he had contracted during his tenure of office.[5] It does not appear that there was normally a central treasury in the abbey or an obedientiary called the treasurer. In so far as there was a central finance office it was that of the chamberlain (camerarius), who was responsible for providing the monks with due clothing,[6] and who presumably paid them their " distributions ". The degree of control which he possessed over the finances as a whole is difficult to discover. Under the system which seems to have been fully elaborated during the second half of the thirteenth century,[7] certain definite revenues were annexed to the offices

the nuns enjoyed the services of an auditor (*Valor*) and the annual accounts, drawn up, presumably, by the steward of the nunnery, are most clear and neat, and give every appearance of having been carefully compiled.

[1] The Chamberlains' Accounts, 1442–60 (Harl. 2005), show that the nuns did eventually receive the £26 due for every year, but not always at regular dates. They received half a dozen or more small payments in several years, and occasionally about half the total is carried over into the following year.

[2] See page 80, note 3. [3] *Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 248.

[4] This appears from the visitation of 1315 (Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 53), when the abbot was accused of wrongfully diverting certain monies from the fabric fund to the use of his own table, and of having bought a number of legal books " with the money of the convent ".

[5] *Burne*, p. 22.

[6] Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. II, p. 259.

[7] Cf. Grant by Abbots Frend and Whitchurch of revenues to particular obedientiaries. Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. II, pp. 259, 271, 283, etc. *Morris*, pp. 119 and 122.

of the principal obedientiaries. Thus the kitchener [1] held some land in Saughall, the tithes of the appropriated church of Shotwick and the chapel of Wervin, the almoner,[2] lands in Ince, Elton and Northgate Street, the infirmarius,[3] houses in Northgate Street and Ironmongers' Row, and the warden of the fabric,[4] most of the demesne tithes belonging to the abbey and certain rents in Chipping Campden, Kingsley, Barnston in Wirral, and elsewhere.[5]

These several funds did not, however, constitute so many water-tight compartments, the contents of which were strictly earmarked for the expenses to be incurred by the obedientiary to whom they were assigned. The system was the product of slow and haphazard growth, which left room for all kinds of overlapping of function and financial responsibility. Thus, when the church of Chipping Campden was appropriated in 1340, its revenues were assigned to the cellarer, but when the abbot and convent agreed, in 1379, to establish a chantry in their church for the soul of Thomas Newport, the abbot, it was decided that the cellarer should pay the " wages " of the monks celebrating at this chantry out of these same revenues. From the same source, he was also to pay the almoner, on the anniversary of Abbot Newport's death, twenty shillings, to be expended on alms and on the provision of a pint of wine to each of the brethren, " that they might with more devotion pray for the soul of Abbot Thomas." [6] There was, in fact, no very clear reason why the revenue of Campden should not have been administered by the almoner or the chamberlain, as little, if any, of it was devoted to the expenses of the cellarer's office.

The disadvantages of these arrangements are sufficiently obvious. The absence of central control made it extremely difficult for the abbot, or the visitor, to obtain a general view of the state of the finances and widened the opportunities for chicanery or negligence on the part of the obedientiaries. Especially if the head of the house was incompetent, were matters likely to fall into confusion. The visitor found such confusion in 1323, for example, as a result of the Abbot Byrchehylles' " *notoria debilitas, ex dierum longinquitate causata* ". He then found it necessary to dismiss the subprior for dishonesty in the administration of alms, and four of the other obedientiaries for incompetence.

The system, or one very like it, was general in the thirteenth century,[7] and during the course of that century the ecclesiastical authorities had

[1] Tait, *Chartulary*, vol. II, pp. 258, 259.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 260–70. There is notice of one Walter de Ince, who was the almoner's sergeant. This would suggest that the obedientiaries were responsible each for the administration of his own estate.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 271–4. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 281–3.

[5] It would seem that in Abbot Whitchurch's time, at least, the sacristan also administered a small fund of his own. (*Ibid.*, p. 259.)

[6] *Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 136. [7] Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, pp. 32–6.

come to rely on certain standard measures of reform to alleviate these defects. "It was repeatedly ordered . . . that the obedientiaries were to present accounts to the head of the house, usually in the presence of some of the elder brethren of the house, and that the abbot also was to lay before the house, or some of its elders, a full account of his administration and the condition of the monastic finances."[1] An injunction to this effect came to be regarded as the panacea for all financial ills. Almost equally common, was the ordination of a central financial office, usually in the control of two bursars or treasurers, "to receive in every case all the moneys of the monastery . . . from whatever source, and to distribute them by command of the abbot, to the other officials . . . as shall be opportune".[2]

The visitors of Chester loyally applied these old and well-tried measures in their attempts to bring some order to the financial chaos which they so often found. Thus, in 1323, the bishop of Lichfield enjoined that annual accounts were to be presented by all obedientiaries, "according to the institutions of Ottobon".[3] In 1400, Archbishop Arundel's visitation confirmed complaints, which had reached the king, that "the possessions of the abbey had been wasted by (the) bad governance" of Abbot Sutton. He enjoined that the abbot was to make a complete disclosure of all present and future debts, either to the whole convent or to an elected committee of six. Two monks were to be elected annually as treasurers, and these treasurers were to receive into their custody all the revenues of the house and to disburse to the obedientiaries such monies as they should require to meet necessary expenses. They were to make annual account of their stewardship, either to the whole convent or another elected committee.[4]

It is impossible to say how far these injunctions were carried out, or for how long the arrangement which they established remained in force. It was, in fact, most unusual for the bursars to retain for long such complete control of the finances of the house, and the situation at St. Werburgh's is once more conforming to the general pattern, when we find, later in the fifteenth century, that certain revenues are passing directly into the hands of other obedientiaries.[5] The treasury had

[1] Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, p. 58. Decrees to this effect were included, for example, in the decrees of the Benedictine Provincial Chapter of 1225 and 1249, the reformed Benedictine Constitutions of Gregory IX, 1238, the Constitutions of the legate Ottobon, 1268, and those of the Benedictine Chapter of 1422.

[2] From the reformed statutes of the Cistercian Order, drawn up by Benedict XII, in 1335. (*Ibid.*, p. 41.) Archbishop Peckham was particularly active in the establishment of such bursaries. (*Ibid.*, p. 40.)

[3] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 36.

[4] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 483.

[5] Harl. 1994, f. 387. A rental for 27–30 Hen. VI of the lands and tenements belonging to the keeper of the fabric.

probably by then become, as it did elsewhere, a sort of central reserve fund out of which extraordinary expenses might be met.[1]

In such a small house as St. Mary's, such elaborate financial machinery was not thought to be necessary, but the visitors had a hard struggle to enforce the presentation of regular annual accounts. In 1331,[2] the bishop enjoined that the prioress and obedientiaries were to give accounts of expenditure, once or twice a year, either to the whole convent, or to a committee specially deputed for the purpose. This system was probably working reasonably well in 1400, when the house was visited by the archbishop of Canterbury, but, by 1455,[3] the convent had fallen into a desperate state of poverty and confusion. When the bishop's commissary visited the house in the following year, he attributed part of the trouble to the fact that several of the obedientiaries were combining more than one office in their possession. Johanna Brett,[4] in particular, combined the offices of cellarer, kitchener and sacristan, and it would appear that she had made no account of her expenditure during the preceding seven years. The prioress was enjoined to present to the convent a true statement of the financial position for the whole of her period of office, and to present regular annual accounts in the future.

It was always difficult, even for a wealthy house whose finances were in good order, to find large sums of ready cash should the need for them arise. Often a loan was the only recourse, and as there was always a great risk, from the creditor's point of view, that a monastic debt would be repudiated, interest was likely to be high. In this way, even a well-endowed house like St. Werburgh's could become more and more enmeshed in debt. The monks often yielded to the temptation to adopt practices which brought a short-term increase in revenue or decrease in expenditure, but which, in the long-term view, inevitably meant a permanent impoverishment, and the longer such a disastrous policy was adhered to the greater became the necessity for it. This, in general, was the financial history of St. Werburgh's, and of course the smaller foundations were driven further along the same path by the pressure of real poverty.

We have seen how the black monks had leased out the greater part of their demesne. This, of course, meant a noteworthy reduction in the expense of administration, but farms brought in considerably less revenue than had formerly been derived from the sale of produce from the demesne. The economic trend of the later middle ages ran always in the favour of the tenant.

[1] Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, pp. 37–52.
[2] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 40.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. X, f. 81.
[4] In spite of her unsatisfactory record, she became prioress in 1473.

The writer has been able to find only one example of the farm of an abbey manor, but it is a most interesting one. In July, 1418,[1] the convent leased to the bishop of Durham, for twelve years, " the manor of Weston upon Trent with its members and appurtenances, and all other lands, rents and services in Weston upon Trent, Aston, Shardlow, Wylne, Morley, Smalley . . . and elsewhere in Derbyshire ", for £44 8*s.* 10½*d.* per annum. As the monks were " burdened with debt ", the bishop agreed to pay the whole sum beforehand. The monks thus obtained one lump payment of 800 marks by alienating all their Derbyshire properties for twelve years to come. Even if the £44 per annum was a fair estimate of the annual value of the property, this was a hand-to-mouth way of living, but it is much more likely that the bishop took advantage of the monks' improvidence to drive a hard bargain. Indeed, the figure given in the *Valor* for the income from these properties—£89 7*s.* 1*d.* per annum—suggests that it was a very hard bargain. Once a house had set foot upon this slippery path, it was difficult to turn back, and doubtless this transaction was not untypical of the abbey's business methods.

It would be too much to expect the ladies of St. Mary's to have been more businesslike. They were incapable of carrying out the valid election of a prioress without assistance,[2] and the financial problems which faced them must have been more pressing than those with which the black monks had to deal. Beatrice le Heyre was the most incompetent head of whom we have notice. She was instituted by the bishop in 1449, being then sub-prioress and of good conversation.[3] Six years later, however, we find the bishop attributing the chaotic state in which the house had fallen to " the negligence, inefficiency and manifest fault of the present prioress ".[4] He must have been confirmed in this impression by the report which was given to him by his commissary after the visitation. The prioress had pawned the ornaments of the house (*jocalia*), and had alienated certain properties " *indiscrete et inutiliter* ". These appear to have been pastures situated on the nuns' demesne south of Handbridge. The bishop enjoined the prioress to redeem, as quickly as possible, a certain pasture in the possession of Nicholas Danyell, a Chester citizen, for which nothing was received. This probably refers to a trans-

[1] *Cal. Clos., 1413–18*, p. 518.

[2] The elections of 1449 (Lich. Reg., vol. X, f. 29) and 1476 (*ibid.*, vol. XII, f. 110) were quashed by the bishop as invalid, though he proceeded, on both occasions, to nominate the ladies who had been chosen by the convent. In 1473, the sub-prioress petitioned the bishop to nominate a new prioress, as the nuns had not enough skill to cope with the subtleties of an election themselves, or money to engage lawyers to supervise their proceedings. (*Ibid.*, f. 107.)

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. X, f. 29.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. XI, f. 81. *Manifeste propter ipsius priorisse nunc incumbente negligenciam, impericiam atque culpam.*

action not unlike the farm of Weston. With episcopal support, the nuns were, perhaps, able to have their cake and eat it.

The history of St. John's hospital, too, tells the same story of possessions unprofitably alienated. In 1316, for example, when the prior of Birkenhead assumed the wardenship of the hospital, he complained to the king that many of the lands and rents of the house had been improperly alienated by former wardens.[1] The inquiry which followed showed "that many properties had been granted away improvidently at fixed perpetual groundrents of small amounts",[2] and it does not appear that these properties were ever recovered.[3] Another inquisition, in 1341, when the hospital was seized into the earl's hands, said that no alms were withdrawn,[4] but a further inquisition was ordered in 1365, "on information that the lands, rents and services of the hospital of St. John were withheld",[5] from which it would seem that the prince was not satisfied with the findings of the earlier jury. This disastrous policy was difficult to check and successive wardens continued to resort to it occasionally. Thus, in 1470, John Mascy, the then warden, granted all the lands, tenements, rents and services of the hospital in Handbridge and Eccleston to John Dedwood for sixty years.[6] Again, in 1512, another warden, Thomas Crewe, leased "a certain field called Hulme field, near Great Boughton, with its appurtenances", to the abbey, for ninety-nine years, at a rent of 30*s.* per annum.[7]

It was not, of course, temporal revenues only, but spiritualities as well, which might be leased or farmed. Indeed, in the fifteenth century, it became almost the general practice for religious houses to farm all, or nearly all, their appropriated rectories.[8] With one exception, we have no evidence that the appropriated tithes of St. Werburgh's or St. Mary's were farmed out, before the sixteenth century,[9] but there must

[1] Harl. 2150, f. 140.

[2] Stewart-Brown, "The Hospital of St. John the Baptist", *loc. cit.*, p. 73. The jury said that Bertram de Verdiner formerly granted a third part of the manor of Pensby in Wirral in free alms, but Hugh de Aston, the warden in 4 Ed. I, alienated it to Hugh de Corona at 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum. That third part is now in the hands of Robert de Manelagh . . . Roger de Meynwaryng formerly gave the hospital a croft in Blacon, alienated 24 Hen. III to one Thomas Pese of Blacon at 2*s.* per annum. A place in Rowe Shotwick was alienated in 50 Hen. III, and a salt-house in Nantwich in 1 Ed. II. (Harl. 2150, f. 140.)

[3] From a comparison of later rental of Hospital, Stewart-Brown, *loc. cit.*, p. 95.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 74. [5] See page 73 n. 4. [6] Harl. 2099, f. 42.

[7] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Second Series, vol. I, p. 37.

[8] Thus Peterborough with six rectories, and Tewkesbury with sixteen, both farmed all but one. Cirencester possessed eleven appropriated rectories and farmed them all. (Smith, *Pre-Reformation* England, p. 37.)

[9] The articles against Wolsey, in 1529 (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. IV, pt. III, p. 2713), include an allegation that he committed to the Fleet one Sir John Stanley till he released a farm which he held of the abbot of Chester to one Leghe of Adlington. Almost certainly this farm was the lease of the appropriated rectory

remain a strong probability that this was usually done, especially in the case of the nunnery. It is difficult to see how else they could have derived any profit from the appropriation of churches in Carmarthen and Carnarvon.

The history of the collegiate church, however, provides us with numerous examples of a practice which was probably common to all three foundations. In 1348, the bishop found the revenues of the college drained by long leases. The canons, it would seem, not only farmed the tithes of the appropriated rectories, but also their prebendal shares in the common fund,[1] the absentees being represented in Chester only by lay proxies, whose sole interest in the collegiate church was a financial one. The bishop, on that occasion, annulled all existing farms and leases, but he was unable to prevent a subsequent return to this improvident system. Thus the rectory of Stoke, " with all its fruits and emoluments except the glebe ", is known to have been farmed every year between 1385–1407, to persons living in the neighbourhood.[2] The tithe of grain of Guilden Sutton was farmed to two citizens of Chester in 1385.[3] Farms of all, or a part, of the tithes of Farndon were made in 1384, 1388, 1395 and 1396, the arrangements made in the latter year being for five years. In 1449, this rectory was farmed for nine years to John Dutton of Hatton.[4] In 1393, the farm of the tithe of grain and hay of Shocklach for one year was granted to David de Shoklach, a local landholder.[5] The dean obtained licence to appropriate the church of Plemstall in 1393 ; in 1395, it was farmed for five years to William Venables of Trafford and others.[6] This last instance provides a good example of the uneconomical character of these farms. The church, when appropriated, was valued at 50 marks (£33 6*s.* 8*d.*), but under this agreement the dean only received £29 9*s.* 4*d.* per annum from the farmers.

It is most unlikely that the canons farmed their revenues only during the short period of years from which this evidence is drawn. A further incidental point of interest is the character of the tithe farmers. It is clear that they were usually members of the lesser landed gentry of the country, resident in or near the parish in question, though they also included a few city merchants. We are thus reminded that the idea of the lay impropriation of tithes was familiar enough many years before the Reformation.

of Prestbury, which is said by *Ormerod* (vol. III, p. 647) to have been held by the Leghes since March, 1448, and which was certainly granted to George Leghe of Adlington in 1525. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XLVI, p. 51.) The abbot of Vale Royal, writing to Cromwell, 21 March, 1538, said that he had not the tenth of Over " except in farm of the prioress of Chester during her pleasure ". (*Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. XIII, pt. I, p. 208.)

[1] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 112.
[2] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 389.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 807.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 743 n.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 687.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 808–9.

The records of the dissolution tell us very little about the normal administration of Chester's ecclesiastical properties, because all the houses, as their end approached, tried to realize their assets. The abbey, the collegiate church, even the friaries, disposed of as much of their property as possible, on long leases. The black monks made ten such leases, in September and October, 1538, including the appropriated rectories of St. Oswald's, Neston, Bromborough and Shotwick, and the manors of Sutton, Huntington and Cheveley, which together made up almost all that part of the demesne which they had succeeded in preserving from the envy of Thomas Cromwell's friends.[1] Similarly, the canons of St. John's, between 1541–4,[2] leased their glebe lands and all their appropriated churches, save Guilden Sutton, St. Martin's and St. Bridget's, for periods of fifty, sixty or more years. Nothing remained for the Carmelites to alienate, but the Dominicans leased a number of tenements and gardens adjacent to their church between 1536 and 1538,[3] while at the dissolution of the Greyfrairs it was said, " ther be owte dyvers leases the whych the vysytor wolde nott allowe because ther was craft in them and ware made of late ", one indenture having been sealed only three days before the surrender.[4]

But this wholesale alienation of church property after 1536 does not preclude the possibility that most of the lands and rectories involved may have frequently been farmed before for shorter periods. The evidence suggests that this was indeed the case. For example, 6 September, 1538, the abbot farmed the rectory of St. Oswald's with all its appurtenances, for sixty-one years, to William Snede, esquire, and William Holcrofte, gentleman. The indenture has the appearance of being a new arrangement, but the fact that the annual payment to be made by the farmers—*£*72 12*s.* 6*d.*—is precisely the figure given for this rectory in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, leads one to doubt whether this was

[1] *Burne*, pp. 23–4. Also tithes in West Kirby and Irby. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXII, p. 52.)

[2] As appears from the rental of properties formerly belonging to the college in P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24.

[3] Two gardens let for life in March, 1532, three tenements with gardens let for life, 1535–6. A tenement and garden let for twenty years, May, 1536. Lands, gardens and orchards, with two old chambers and a ruinous building, with all the surrounding stone walls on the east and north of the house and church, leased for a hundred and one years, May, 1537. A tenement with a garden let for sixty years, 6 July, 1538. Three houses lying together at the lower part of the church, with an orchard and garden adjacent, let for fifty years, July, 1538. (Palmer, " Black Friars of Chester ", *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 101.)

[4] These crafty leases included the farm of one small toft on the east side of the church, demised to Ralph Rogerson, 30 April, 1538, for 80 years, at a yearly rent of 2*s.* The royal visitor noted that the said Ralph paid to the prior there 20*s.* on entry. (Bennett, " Grey Friars of Chester ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, vol. XXIV, pp. 32 and 37.)

really so. Moreover it would appear that the monks were in reality farming not the tithes and offerings of the rectory itself, but merely the profits to be derived from farms of those tithes already made. The indenture is endorsed:

> Providet always that this indenture or dymyssion or anything therein contained be not . . . hurtfull to a certeyn lease heretofore made to Rafe Goodman of Chester, Alderman, for the tyth corne and malte of Dee Mills, nor to an other lease made to Hugh Broster of Chester of the tyth corne and hay of Wyrvyn, nor also to an other lease made to Thomas Gose of the tyth corne and hay of the Bache to the heretofore severally divised and letten to farme by the within named Abbot and convent . . . for terme of yeares and the said Rafe, Hugh and Thomas . . . paying yerely during their said termes to the said Wm. Snede and Wm. Holcroft and their assignes, their several rents mentioned in their said leases, at dayes and tymes lymyted, &c.[1]

For similar reasons, it seems likely that the leases of the tythes of Bromborough, Shotwick and Neston, made in the October following, were in fact the renewal or confirmation of an existing farm.[2] We know, too, that the monks farmed their church of Prestbury, and the nuns, their share of the tithes of Over,[3] before any fear of dissolution had come upon them.

Under certain circumstances, the leasing of a part of the monastic demesne might be merely a sensible administrative measure, but the stern disapproval expressed by the visitor in his injunction to St. John's, for example, in 1348, or to the abbey, in 1400, suggests that, too often, a farm was virtually security for a loan. Another arrangement, in itself innocuous, which could be transformed into a dangerous kind of borrowing, was the corrody. A corrody might be granted for services rendered or to oblige a patron of the house, but more commonly they were sold by the monks to raise ready money. This practice was not only financially unsound, it also endangered regular discipline by the introduction of lay persons into the precincts of the monastery.

The church sought to restrain irresponsible borrowing by religious houses, by insisting that loans might be contracted, lands alienated, or corrodies granted by the head of the house, only with the knowledge and consent of the whole convent, and the English law provided an action for the recovery of lands alienated without this consent.[4] Furthermore, corrodies were not to be granted unless urgent necessity demanded it and the diocesan's consent had been given.[5]

All these conditions were repeatedly infringed in Chester. The granting or selling of pensions and corrodies without the consent of

[1] Harl. 2071, f. 47.

[2] The figures are again identical with those in the *Valor*, £61 9*s*. o*d*. for Bromborough, £36 9*s*. 8*d*. for Neston, £23 7*s*. o*d*. for Shotwick.

[3] See page 87, note 9.

[4] Snape, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[5] According to the statutes of the Council of Oxford, 1222. (*Ibid.*, p. 145.)

the bishop was expressly forbidden to the monks in 1315,[1] and to the nuns in 1331.[2] In the latter year, injunctions were issued, both for St. John's [3] and St. Mary's,[4] for the common custody of the seal and muniments of the house, and a similar arrangement was adopted in the case of the abbey in the injunctions of 1400.[5] The abbot was enjoined, in 1315,[6] to act, in all great and difficult matters, only with the advice of the " maior et sanior pars " of the convent. An injunction of 1400 [7] was more explicit. No important business was to be transacted and no debts greater than £10 paid, without the knowledge and assent of the convent or the greater and wiser part thereof. On no account was the abbot to make sales or alienations of any kind upon his own authority, and without such knowledge and assent. In 1456, the bishop of Lichfield forbade the prioress to make any alienations whatsoever "*mobilium seu immobilium*", without the express consent of the whole convent given in full chapter, and without his own knowledge and consent.[8]

The poverty of the nuns drove them into further irregularities. It was normal for a nunnery to keep a school for small children and to take occasional paying guests,[9] and the prioress of Chester was not alone in requiring a dowry on the admittance of novices, a practice which the church condemned as simoniacal,[10] but besides these common devices the nuns of St. Mary's had devised a less innocuous way of augmenting their revenue. No one looking through the list of ordinations in the fifteenth-century episcopal registers could fail to be impressed by the very large numbers of candidates ordained to the title of the nuns of Chester.[11] In the seventeen years from 1453–70, nineteen clerks were so ordained. In only five of those years, there were none, and in two years (1463 and 1468) there were three. In the five years 1493–6, there were no fewer

[1] Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 53. Yet in June, 1415, the revenues of the abbey were charged with great pensions, annuities and corrodies. (*Cal. Pat., 1413–16*, p. 353.)

[2] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 40.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. III, f. 41. They were to be kept in a chest which could only be unlocked by three keys. One of these was to be retained by the dean or his proxy, one by a resident canon or a specially elected vicar, and the third by the sacristan. The same method was adopted in the injunctions for the abbey and the priory.

[4] *Ibid.*, f. 40. This injunction repeated in 1456. (*Ibid.*, vol. XI, f. 81.)

[5] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 483.

[6] Lich Reg., vol. I, f. 53.

[7] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 483.

[8] Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 81.

[9] In 1358, it was said that " the prioress kept divers ladies, damsels and children at her table in the said house ". *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 310.

[10] This practice was condemned by the bishop on his visitation of St. Mary's in 1331. (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 40.) It was a very common fault in English nunneries. (Jacka, p. 2.)

[11] These were, for example, very much more numerous than those ordained to the title of St. Werburgh.

than twenty-two, ten of whom were ordained in the latter year.[1] It is incredible that the nuns should have continued to provide *bona fide* employment for such a steady stream of newly-ordained priests, and the obvious implication is that they were conducting some kind of surreptitious employment agency. If this was, in fact, the case, we may be sure that money changed hands in the course of these transactions. Such practices entailed grave social consequences. They defeated the attempts of the bishops to check clerical under-employment. It has already been remarked that the most disorderly element among the clergy in Chester—and they were, at times, scandalously disorderly—was the unbeneficed mass priests. It is, perhaps, not without significance that Robert Fraunces, one of the ringleaders of the trouble-makers in the early years of the sixteenth century, is known to have been ordained, in 1493, to the nuns' title.[2]

The church in Chester failed to derive the full advantages from her great resources and economic power, because those resources were very inequitably distributed, and because they were often improvidently administered. If nothing more were said, however, the reader would be left with too gloomy a picture. Medieval records of such matters tend to be a catalogue of ills. One seldom finds specific notice of efficient administration, of a decrease in, or absence of, debt, of sober orderly lives, and of divine service decently performed. We may be certain that there were brighter pages in the history of these foundations, than those which we are still able to read.

[1] Lich. Reg., vols. X, XI, XII and XIII. The writer has only made a full count for the years mentioned in the text, but a similarly large number occur in the earlier years of the fifteenth century.

[2] Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. I, f. 179. His name occurs frequently in the municipal archives as a " common night walker ".

CHAPTER V

PIOUS BEQUESTS AND CHANTRY FOUNDATIONS

It was a favourite text of medieval clerics that the labourer is worthy of his hire. The strength of the church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had lain, in no small measure, in its power to evoke the devotion of multitudes of ordinary lay people and to induce them to grant lands, revenues and advowsons to religious foundations. There can hardly be for the historian a clearer guide to the changes in the relative popularity of such foundations than in the record of donations to pious uses. An attempt will therefore be made in this chapter to survey the trends and distribution of donations and bequests.

As far as grants of real estate to the church are concerned the matter is perfectly clear. There were none of any consequence. It is true that a considerable quantity of house property continued to be bestowed on religious bodies in the city, but even this type of endowment had almost ceased by 1400. There is every indication that the church was less, not more, influential in the economic structure of the neighbourhood, at the end of the period than it had been at the beginning.

These remarks are especially applicable to St. Werburgh's. The monastic houses of earlier times had enjoyed a never failing source of new capital in the support of the baronial classes. By the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century this source had dried up. Authorities are not inclined to allow much influence in this matter to the Statute of Mortmain.[1] The most cursory survey of the chancery enrolments brings to light any number of cases where a religious house succeeded in obtaining a pardon for breaches of this statute on payment of a fine to the crown.[2] Licences seem always to have been available if the house

[1] e.g. Plucknett, *Legislation of Edward I*, p. 100. Wood-Legh, *Church Life in England*, p. 60 *et seq.* Tout, *Political History of England, 1216–1377*, p. 60, quoted Wood-Legh, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[2] Cf. following local examples :

July, 1352 (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 66), " order to the justice and chamberlain of Chester, inasmuch as the prince for a fine of ten marks made with him by the nuns of St. Mary, Chester, has granted them license to acquire from Hugh de Novel Chastel, chaplain, and Margaret Banastre, two messuages and forty acres in Lache by Merleston which are held of the prince in chief . . . and has also pardoned them the trespass of the said Sir Hugh and Margaret (and also the nuns) for having without his license acquired from Cecily de Compton certain lands in Chester held of the prince in chief."

1349. Pardon to the dean and chapter of the collegiate church of St. John for acquiring from John de Stoke, citizen of Chester, three messuages in capite of the

could plead poverty—and what monks could not ? [1] It is clear that there was a real loss of public confidence in monastic institutions, which was both the result and a contributory cause of a decline among the religious of their sense of vocation and of their purity of life.

In view of their long history of strained relations with the citizens, we would not expect the black monks of Chester to be more popular than their brethren elsewhere, and in this instance the earl did offer some resistance to further expansion.[2] St. Werburgh's possessed in 1540 no estates of notable value that they did not hold in 1340, or even fifty years earlier.[3]

The nunnery fared little better. A trickle of grants to the nuns continued until the end of the fourteenth century,[4] but donations were

bishop of Coventry and Lichfield " *ad fabricam ipsius Ecclesie* ". (C.R.R., 22 & 3 Ed. III, m. 3d.(2), in Appendix II to *The Thirty-sixth Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 91.)

1353. The pardon to the monks cited in note 3 below.

[1] e.g. the nuns' licence of 1381 referred to below.

[2] In 1353, he gave back to the abbey certain lands, messuages, rents and pastures in Rudheath, which he had lately recovered from the monks in process before the justice of Chester. (C.R.R., 26 & 27 Ed. III, m. 4d.(2), in Appendix II to *The Thirty-sixth Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 514.) This grant was perhaps made in consideration of a fine of 400 marks payed by the abbey at about the same time. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 137.)

[3] This is clearly established by a comparison of the *Valor* and the Dissolution Survey (printed in *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 274) with the Chartulary of the Abbey, which contains notices of all the lands held by the monks before about 1290. Small grants continued to be made for some time after this last date. e.g. Oct., 1330 (*Cal. Pat., 1330–1334*, p. 12), confirmation in mortmain, to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh Chester of (1) a release by Richard de Morleye of a rent of 4*s.* in Smalley ; (2) a grant by Geoffrey de Holes of his land in Holes upon Rudheath ; (3) a release by Henry Launcelyn, lord of Poulton Lancelyn, of a messuage and fifteen and a half selions of land in Bromborough, which he had from Richard de Longelak ; (4) grants by Henry de Brumburgh, chaplain, of lands in Little Neston and Hargrave in Wirral, which he had from Emma le Biroun, and of lands in Holes by Lostok, which he had from Geoffrey, son of Robert de Holes ; (5) a grant of a messuage, 3 acres 1 rood of land and ½ acre of meadow in Weston and Aston on Trent ; (6) a grant by Robert de Purton of lands in Smalley, which he had from Robert del Grove of Smalley.

10 Sept., 1353, pardon (from Prince of Wales) for the acquisition of land at Bromborough and rent in Chester, and a licence to acquire other land in Chester, and rent elsewhere. (*Cal. Pat., 1422–9*, p. 485.)

Dec., 1360, inquisition *ad quod damnum* in respect of a grant to the abbey of two tofts and ten acres of land in Church Lawton. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 402.)

This is the latest acquisition of property by the abbey to be noticed in the patent rolls and there is no reason to suppose that any of the properties listed above came to the monks as a free gift. We hear of the purchase of certain property in Bromborough 1351. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 2.)

[4] 1352 (P.R.O., Chester 3/1, 23 Ed. III), in an inquisition before the mayor, the jury said that the earl had granted the nuns all the lands and tenements which

not easily come by, and had to be vigorously solicited. In January, 1381, the king granted a licence, " on account of the poverty of the house ", to the prioress and nuns of St. Mary's, to acquire in mortmain, lands in the county of Chester, not held in chief, to the value of 20 marks yearly.[1] It was not until May, 1392, that the nuns were found to have acquired lands to the full value of the licence; forty acres in Lache, eighteen in Claverton, and certain tenements and rents in the city. The grantees with one exception were all chaplains,[2] and probably not the actual donors of the property. It looks as though it had taken the nuns ten years to acquire these quite modest rents, and that they were made up by a large number of small contributions. There is no positive evidence of any grant of real property to the nuns after 1400.[3]

The friars, by contrast, seem to have been still in the first stage of expansion in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. In October, 1332, the Franciscans acquired a plot of land, 103 ft. long by 32 ft. broad, " for the enlargement of their said dwelling house ",[4] and, in 1360, further enlargement appears to have followed.[5] In the next year, the Dominicans obtained " a messuage and a plot of land adjoining (their) garden ".[6] More generous grants were made to the Carmelites in 1350 and 1355, and in the latter year, their convent, too, was being enlarged.[7]

were once of Cecily de Compton (the original donor of the property) in Northgate Street and a mease in Ironmonger's row, which the said Cecily by her last will gave them for ever, to hold by the service of " theve watch ", subject to a rent of 12*d.* to the prior of Norton, and 6*d.* rent to the church of St. Peter. July, 1352, lands in Lache; see note 2, page 93. A similar grant in 1372 may be a duplication. 1371, vicar of Over grants, in mortmain, 14 acres of land, 3 acres of wood and an acre of turbary in Oldewarton with common pasture there. (Inspeximus of 1400. *Cal. Pat.*, p. 303, quoted Irvine, " The Nunnery of St. Mary ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XIII, p. 91 *et seq.*) According to Irvine, the only additional acquisition after 1400 was that of certain rents in Lathom near Ormskirk.

[1] *Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 587. [2] *Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 62.

[3] The last considerable grant to the hospital of St. John was made in Nov., 1365. (Stewart-Brown, " The Hospital of St. John the Baptist, Chester ", *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.*, vol. LXXVI., pp. 94 and 95.) It consisted of 8*s.* rent in the town of Hope and 7½ acres " by the park of Lloitcoyd ", together with " eleven messuages, two shops, a fourth part of a seld and 6*s.* rent of assize . . . to be held . . . for ever for the . . . maintenance of a chaplain to celebrate divine service in the hospital for the king and queen and their ancestors and heirs, . . . a clerk to serve continually in the church of the hospital, a servant to wait upon the infirm brethren and sisters, and other works of charity in the hospital." (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, pp. 486 and 487.) Of St. Giles, all that can be said is that David Barrs, one of the fifteenth-century wardens, is reported to have " given money to endow them ". (Harl. 2153, f. 165.)

[4] *Cal. Pat., 1330–4*, p. 360, quoted Bennett, " Grey Friars of Chester ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXIV, p. 20.

[5] Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 21, from Camerarius Cestrie. (P.R.O., Augm., vol. 279.)

[6] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 421.

[7] They had acquired a piece of land, 200 ft. by 160 ft., next to their " mansion ". (*Ibid.*, p. 177; *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 421.) In 1355 they were pardoned for having

A new factor in the situation was the emergence of the religious fraternities. To them was diverted in the second half of the century, the stream of small grants of rents, house property and the like, which in earlier times must have fallen to the share of the monastic foundations. That this was a national trend is shown by the statute of 1391,[1] which brought donations of land to guilds and fraternities within the scope of the Statute of Mortmain. At the same time, the whole of religious life was profoundly modified by the multiplication of chantries and semi-private masses.

Of the permanent alienation of real property to religious uses, it may be said that by 1325 saturation point had been reached. It is not simply a question of a decline in zeal. There was also a decline in prosperity and social stability, and it is probable that further sweeping alienations of property to the church were not economically possible.

The medieval church taught its members to attach the greatest solemn importance to the hour of death, and many ordinary men realized the financial obligations of their religion more clearly in that hour than ever in life. From the wills of the period, executed, very many of them, *in articulo mortis*, comes much of the detail which gives life to our knowledge of the fifteenth-century church.

Unfortunately, relatively few Chester wills survive—only about eighty,[2] from the very earliest examples to those proved in the fifteen-forties—but their number is sufficient for them to be usefully considered as a representative sample. It should be remembered, however, that the formalities of the law of probate were only complied with when the inheritance of considerable property was at stake, and that the evidence of these wills, which passed through the ecclesiastical courts, therefore relates only to the wealthier elements of the middle class.

The writer has examined fifty-three complete wills which have survived from the period 1400–1540,[3] of persons resident in Chester and the immediate neighbourhood, or of members of Chester families, resident elsewhere, who remembered the churches of their native city.

The most striking fact which emerges from an analysis of the bequests which these wills contain, is the comparative popularity of the friars, who were beneficiaries under thirty-eight of them. During the greater part of the fifteenth century, donations to the mendicants though

acquired certain plots of land from three citizens of Chester. (C.R.R., 28 & 29, Ed. III, m. 3(6), in Appendix I to *The Thirty-sixth Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 92.)

[1] 15 Richard II, cap. 5.

[2] See Appendix A for full list of wills consulted.

[3] The writer confines his analysis of testamentary bequests to those made after 1400, because extant wills for the fourteenth century are too few in number, only about half a dozen, and too scattered in time, to constitute useful material for such an approach.

usually small [1] constituted the most popular form of pious bequest, and even in the latest pre-reformation times it came only second to the endowment of a mass priest to celebrate for a term of years.

The Carmelites enjoyed a peculiarly favoured status. Bequests to them are to be found in nearly three-quarters of the wills examined,[2] and, for the first half of the sixteenth century, the monetary value of these bequests is almost equal to the combined total of gifts to the Franciscans [3] and Dominicans.[4] Their priority in this matter was doubtless associated with the popularity of their church as a burial place with a number of the most influential city families, but there is some evidence also that they were the most highly regarded of the mendicant orders in the country as a whole,[5] and that their prayers were generally esteemed to be of particular value.[6]

Bequests of any kind to the black monks were extremely uncommon,[7] but the sisters of St. Mary's still occupied a respected place in the life of the town. They are noticed in wills much less frequently than the friars, only eight times, but it is more common here to find comparatively large sums involved.

In 1521, for example,[8] Margaret Hawarden, a relative of the Stanleys of Hooton and widow of John Hawarden, a former justice of Chester,

[1] Most frequently the testator made a similar bequest to all three orders in Chester, a bequest which usually took the form of a candle, or taper, and a small sum of money—commonly half a mark, but there were some notable exceptions. The gift of £20, which Nicholas Southworth left, in 1489, to the " Fryers in Chester where my brethren and sisters lieth ", was probably made to the Carmelites. In 1508, Roger Smith was buried in their convent and left them £6 13*s.* 4*d.* In 1521, Mrs. Hawarden, also buried there, left £3 6*s.* 8*d.* " to the makynge of the tombe and reparacion of the said church ". [2] In thirty-five instances.

[3] The grey friars had lost much of their old popularity by the sixteenth century, but, in earlier times, they were almost the equals of the Carmelites in the public regard. They occur as beneficiaries in thirty wills, in three or four of which they are more favoured than the other orders.

[4] The black friars occur in twenty-five wills.

[5] Wood-Legh, *op. cit.*, p. 82. [6] Coulton, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 18.

[7] They received bequests under only five of the wills examined. Two of the testators, Ralph Davenport, an alderman (1505), and his brother-in-law, Nicholas Southworth (1409), sometime a clerk of the kitchen to Edward IV (*Cal. Pat., 1476–85*, p. 222), had traditional family associations with the abbey, where the latter's father, John, a former mayor, was buried. Wm. Danald (1526) was probably a parishioner of St. Oswald's who chose to be buried in the abbey, while Henry Raynforde (1506) and Ralph Lawton (1531) were priests who had occupied abbey livings, and who might naturally be expected to have been more generously disposed to the monks than the public in general. From Southworth, the monks received the generous gift of £20, but he was a very wealthy man who left a similar sum to the Carmelite convent, and one of £40 to the Fraternity of St. George.

[8] In 1415, they were left 15 marks by Adam Mottrum, the precentor of Salisbury, while in 1535 Hugh Robinson, a former steward of the nunnery who desired to be buried in their church, left the priory a " standing cuppe of gilt ", 3*s.* 4*d.* to every professed nun, and 12*d.* to every novice.

left them £10 to the making of the cloister, 20*s.* to be divided among the nuns, and several other gifts to the prioress and individual sisters. In fact, the total monetary value of extant bequests to St. Mary's, between 1500 and 1540, amounts to £15, by contrast to £19 for the Carmelites, and about £10 each for the Dominicans and Franciscans. The popularity of all these convents is further demonstrated by the brisk demand which evidently existed for their grants of confraternity,[1] while the practice of depositing private muniments in their care testifies to the public confidence which they enjoyed.[2]

The fourteenth-century popularity of the religious guilds was comparatively short-lived. After 1450, the flow of donations practically ceased, and there are only one or two minor testamentary notices of either of the fraternities.[3]

The two ancient hospitals of the city had ceased, apparently, to be the objects of generous benefaction,[4] although there was a good deal

[1] The Franciscans and Dominicans made a practice of drawing up blank grants of confraternity and subsequently inserting the names of subscribers. (Bennett, " A Grant of Confraternity of the Grey Friars of Chester ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXVIII, pt. II, p. 211 ; " Black Friars of Chester ", *ibid.*, vol. XXXIX, pp. 48 and 49.) Only one grant by the Carmelites survives, dated 1463 (Harl. 2099, f. 439, quoted Bennett, " White Friars of Chester ", *ibid.*, vol. XXXI, p. 18), but other evidence of their great popularity makes it almost certain that it was only one of very many. In 1353, Cecily de Compton was admitted to confraternity with the nuns. (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 146.)

[2] June, 1294, Ralph Peppard, by deed dated at Rotherfield Peppard, granted to John Peppard, his son, for life, all his castles, manors, etc., in Ireland, at the rent of 500 marks a year, . . . to be deposited with the friars preachers of Chester. (Bennett, " Black Friars of Chester ", *ibid.*, vol. XXXIX, p. 45.) 1395, the warden of the black friars was imprisoned in the Northgate for unlawfully detaining a chest containing charters and other documents belonging to William Bagot, kt. (*Morris*, p. 146.) 1426, quitclaim to the prioress by James Hope and Henry, son of Robert de Parys, of all rights of action touching the detention of two chests of muniments relating to lands and tenements of Robert de Parys. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXI, p. 9.)

Also interesting in this connection is the responsibility placed upon the nuns by the founders of the hospital of St. Ursula. The prioress was a party to the foundation deed, and was given the right to nominate to vacancies in the hospital, in the event of the mayor and aldermen failing to do so within a hundred and twelve days. (Bennett, " Hospital of St. Ursula ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXIII, pt. II, p. 102.)

[3] 1462, Richard Gerard gave 1 messuage in Northgate Street to St. George's Guild. (Harl. 7568, f. 196.) 1489, Nicholas Southworth, £40 for suitable ornaments to St. George. 1535, Middleton, 6*s.* 8*d.* to St. George. 1531, Jane Ley of Chester, 10*d.* " to the behoffe of Seynt George's auter ". In 1496, John Hawarden left this fraternity 20*s.* from a mease in Bridge Street, " if they will agree to pray for my soul, etc." St. Anne's is only noticed in the wills of Margaret Hawarden, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Baxter.

[4] 1413, John Coly, 40*d.* to the poor widows of the hospital of St. John. 1505, Ralph Davenport, 3*s.* ; 1506, Henry Raynforde, 20*d.* ; 1521, Margaret Hawarden, 40*d.*, all to St. John's. Raynforde also left 20*d.* to " the sele folk at Boughton ".

of begging by, or on behalf of, their unfortunate inmates.[1] The confidence of the public had been alienated from St. John's by its long history of mismanagement and corruption, and it is not surprising that solicitude for the destitute should have taken the form of a new foundation. In 1508, Roger Smith, a member of a distinguished merchant family in the city and a former sheriff, made a bequest of property in Common-hall Lane, which led to the foundation, two years later, of the Hospital and Fraternity of St. Ursula the Virgin. By arrangement with his executors, the corporation erected "six several mansions or tenements under one roof, convenient and able for six poore bedemen", upon a vacant site adjoining the old Common Hall. According to the founder's will, places in the hospital were reserved in the first instance for former aldermen or common councillors who had fallen on evil days, and only failing them for any suitable poor persons.[2] This is typical of the growing civic isolationism of sixteenth-century Chester, which was doubtless stimulated by the onset of commercial decline. Henceforth, the testamentary gifts of citizens tended to be diverted from the old hospitals to the new one.[3]

More frequently, the dying testators' last thought for the poor took the form of bread or money doles to be distributed at the funeral, or new cloaks for twelve poor men to carry torches. The primary object, in other words, was not charity or the fulfilment of a civic obligation, but to ensure the attendance of as large a crowd as possible at the funeral and, without too much expense, to place the largest possible number of persons under some obligation to pray for the testator.[4] Only comparatively few citizens, wealthier or more public-spirited than the majority, left generous bequests of this nature, or for the repair and maintenance of roads and bridges.[5]

[1] It had long been customary for the bishop to award a forty days' indulgence for benefactions to St. John's, and in 1493 an indulgence of seven years was offered to all who assisted it. (P.R.O. Chester, 38/26/5.)

[2] Bennett, "The Hospital of, St. Ursula", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXII, pt. II, p. 98 *et seq.* Smith was sheriff in 1499. His brother, Sir Thomas Smith, was mayor several times and owner of considerable property in the city and elsewhere, including the halls of Thornton Hough and Flookersbrook.

[3] Especially noteworthy was the bequest made in 1536 by Thomas Baxter the rector of St. Peter's. He left £6 13*s.* 4*d.* to the house of St. Ursula; 16*d.* to each of the poor men and women there; a suit of clothes, a vestment and a hanging of silk for the altar. An almsman was to be found at the hospital to pray for him and his parents for ever. He was probably a member and, perhaps, the chaplain of the fraternity.

[4] John Coly (1413), 1 mark to be distributed among priests at funeral, 10*s.* for white cloth for paupers who carry torches. 20*s.* to be spent on bread for the poor annually on his obit. 1505, Davenport, nine white cloaks for nine paupers; similar bequests by William Rogerson (1519), Dr. Thomas Sparke (1527), Elizabeth Hurleston (1528), and Thomas Middleton (1535).

[5] 1413, Coly, 10*s.* to the repair of the highway at Wetfield. 1499, Norres, 20*s.* to the repair of the highway between Eaton and Chester. 1506, Raynforde, 6*s.* 8*d.*

The medieval Christian was, of course, primarily concerned in donating alms to religious uses, to make those arrangements most conducive to the benefit of his soul after death, and it was his conviction that "amongst other means of restoring fallen humanity, the solemn celebration of masses is to be judged the highest in merit".[1] There was a growing practice in monastic houses of "consolidating" masses and anniversary services for founders and benefactors, a practice which meant a serious depreciation in the eyes of the pious layman of the value of any monastic undertaking for perpetual prayers, and which was an important factor in the decrease of simple donations to the older religious institutions.[2] From the beginning of our period, and earlier, wealthy individuals had been accustomed to make more elaborate provision for their spiritual needs.

It was in the foundation of chantry chapels, that the popular piety of the later middle ages found its most enduring expression. The whole question of the nature and development of the chantry has, however, been strangely neglected until very recent years, perhaps because it presents unusual difficulties. A chantry has been defined as "any foundation, whether temporary or permanent, the main object of which was to provide daily or weekly services, primarily masses, for the souls or the good estate of particular individuals".[3] As Professor A. H. Thompson has pointed out,[4] most grants of property to religious uses, even in the earliest days of the English church, were made with the more or less explicit intention of securing to the donor the prayers of the beneficiaries. It is difficult to isolate the motives for founding a chantry from those which, in general, inspired all medieval works of piety, and, consequently, to differentiate the chantry proper from a variety of other arrangements designed to augment the prayers of the church.

To illustrate this difficulty by a local example, in September, 1367, a gift of 100 marks was made to the Carmelite convent in Chester, by Thomas Statham, gentleman, of Lymme.[5] The friars undertook, in

"to the mendyng of the hitherende of the cawsey beyond Wartyn Myll". 1521, Margaret Hawarden, 13*s.* 4*d.*, "to the reparacion and mending of Trafforde Brigge". 1527, Dr. Thomas Sparke, "I will that where ther be any foule wayes nyght the citie wher that both man and best standith in jopardy . . . to comyng to the marketh for the comyn welthe that then I will such be holpen with parte of the forsaid money that is laft as myn executors shall thynke best." 1539, Ralph Rogers left 6*s.* 8*d.* to the mending of the highway in "Huntynton Lane", 20*s.* to the mending of the bridge at Pulford, and 10*s.* to the repair of that at Hockenhull Platt.

[1] The words of a chantry founder quoted Wood-Legh, "Some Aspects of the History of Chantries in the Later Middle Ages", *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.*, Fourth Series, vol. XXVIII, p. 47.

[2] Cf. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. III, p. 65 *et seq.*

[3] Wood-Legh, *op. cit.*, p. 47. [4] Hamilton Thompson, *English Clergy*, p. 132.

[5] The deed, one of the Hornby Chapel documents, is now in the Lancashire County Record Office at Preston, and its substance was communicated to the writer

exchange, to make a special commemoration of Thomas, and of Isabel his wife, in the daily conventual mass, and moreover, since the house had no recognized founder, to confer upon them the title of founder with such spiritual benefits as were annexed to it. This arrangement does not fall within our definition of a chantry, the main object of the grant being evidently the furtherance of the convent's evangelical work. But life is not lived according to definitions, and, for contemporaries, there was no difference of principle between such donations as this and the foundation of a chantry proper.

A foundation of 1471, although of late date, well illustrates the next stage in the development of the chantry. In an agreement of that date, it is recited that Cecily, widow of Sir William Torbok, had given much alms to the Dominican friary, and in particular £10, for the erection of certain necessary buildings. Every day for ever, one of the brethren was to celebrate for her soul, and for those of her father, mother and husband, and to say a special requiem upon her obit day.[1] Here we find that a special service for particular named individuals has been inaugurated, but, on the other hand, its foundation was not the primary object of the original donation, and the sum involved was not sufficient to defray the cost of employing a priest specifically to celebrate it. In the country as a whole, it was uncommon for the friars to undertake such perpetual services,[2] but several examples of similar agreements have survived from fourteenth-century Chester.[3]

At the other end of the scale, we find the most developed type

by R. Sharpe France, esq., the county archivist. The family of Statham takes its name from that of a hamlet in the parish of Lymme. Its members bore the arms of Lymme, and it is supposed that they were descended from that family. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 584.)

[1] Harl. 2176, f. 27, quoted Palmer, "Black Friars of Chester", *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 100. The family was seated at Tarbock in Lancashire. Cecily was probably the daughter of Sir Henry le Norreys of Speke. (*V.C.H., Lancs*, vol. III, p. 181 n.)

[2] Wood-Legh, *Church Life in England*, p. 77.

[3] 1293. "Order to the treasurer and chamberlains of Chester to deliver to the Friars Minor of Chester the £33 10*s*. (that a certain royal clerk had caused to be arrested in their house), as the king learns, by inquisition taken by (the) justice of Chester, that John de Barwe, chaplain, gave and assigned this money to them, long before it was thus arrested, to find a chaplain to celebrate divine service for ever for the salvation of his soul". (*Cal. Clos.*, 1288–96, p. 372.) In 1348, Sir Gilbert de Haydoc, presumably a chaplain, "purchased", from the prior of the Carmelites, a perpetual chantry within their convent for the sum of 40 marks. (Quoted Bennett, "White Friars of Chester", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXI, p. 11.) Although these services are described as perpetual, the sums involved were clearly insufficient to provide for the permanent maintenance of an independent service for the grantors' souls. They presumably hoped to secure to themselves some measure of perpetual benefit from the general services of the friars. There is also a note in Harl. 7568 (f. 184) that, in the reign of Henry III, the white friars, acting as trustees, paid the priest of St. Michael for three dirges.

of permanent foundation, a chantry chapel, specially built for the purpose, endowed with its own revenues, and recognized as a full sinecure benefice occupied by a formally instituted and perpetual incumbent.

This type, in its most complete form, was never very popular in Chester. There was in fact only one such foundation there, of which evidence has survived, the chantry of the Blessed Virgin in the collegiate church. It was also one of the earliest chantries in the town, having been founded sometime before 1230 by a member of the Orreby family, who was probably that Philip de Orreby who was justice of Chester, 1202–29.[1]

The nature and extent of the chantry's original endowments are difficult to determine. Throughout the period, the senior cantarist seems to have retained in his possession a document, purporting to be the foundation deed, according to which the churches of Overchurch, Guilden Sutton, and St. Martin's and St. Bridget's in Chester had been granted to the dean and chapter of St. John's to provide, among other charges, for the maintenance of the chantry.[2] The bulk of these revenues was not, however, at any time, devoted to this end.[3] The inquisition held in the church in 1318 describes the churches in question as being appropriated to the chapter, and the chantry of the Virgin is not even mentioned in connection with them.[4]

In the sixteenth century, the income of the senior cantarist, apart from his share " as a canon " in the common fund of the chapter, was derived from house rents in Chester, and from three salt pans in Nantwich.[5] The rents in Nantwich are known to have been granted to St. John's by Orreby,[6] and it is probable that these properties had always represented the greater part of the chantry's endowments, and that the more ambitious claims of the cantarist had never been based upon the realities of possession.

The service was entirely suppressed in 1543, and it is interesting to note that its endowments reverted to the possession of the Brereton

[1] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XX, p. 61.

[2] These circumstances are recited in the complaint presented by the cantarist, Adam de Wigan, to the Black Prince in 1354. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 152.) They are repeated, in almost identical terms, by Peter Brereton, the latest of his successors, in a complaint to the Court of Requests, about the beginning of 1539. (Court of Requests, Bundle 1, No. 96, printed *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 27. See also *Letters and Papers Henry VIII*, Addenda, vol. I, pt. II, p. 478.)

[3] Nor is it certain that all the churches named were in fact donated by Orreby, since there is also on record the statement that the church of Overchurch was given to the chapter by a former dean. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XX, p. 60.)

[4] Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.

[5] P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, 6/24. *Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.

[6] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XX, p. 60.

family, who, as the heirs of Philip de Orreby, had long been the patrons of the benefice.[1]

The Orreby chantry is not remarkably early in date. Chantries began to appear in England from the earliest years of the thirteenth century,[2] but their popularity in Chester appears to have been of slow growth, and we hear of no more foundations until the last quarter of that century. It is easy to understand why none of the founders followed Orreby's example, and established their chantries as full benefices. Such benefices were expensive to endow, and the very considerable measure of independence, which was conferred by this arrangement upon the celebrant, did nothing to diminish the ever-present danger that the service would not long be maintained according to the letter of the founder's wishes. At the same time, the prospect of perpetual celebrations for his soul was naturally an attractive one to the pious benefactor. All the fourteenth-century chantries, of which we have notice, were generously endowed and intended to be permanent. Their founders, who were usually prominent landowners of the neighbourhood, rather than citizens of Chester, commonly chose to confer their benefactions upon one of the religious houses in the city, and to place upon the religious the responsibility of appointing the incumbent and supervising him in the performance of his office.

In about 1270, John Arneway granted the manor of Crabwell in Blacon, and certain other lands, to the abbey for the foundation of two chantries,[3] and a few years later, Sir Philip Burnel of Malpas agreed to forgo a debt of £200, owed to him by the monks,[4] in exchange for the appointment of two chaplains to pray for him. In the fourteenth

[1] The rents of the chantry were let by the dean and chapter, and the cantarist, to Richard Brereton, esq., of Leigh (the younger son of Sir William Brereton of Brereton), for £5 per annum, 1543 (P.R.O., Rentals & Surveys, 6/24; *Piccope*, vol. I, p. 169), and were still in his hands in 1557. (*Ibid.*) After the dissolution of the college, this rent of £5, together with certain of the prebends' lands, was granted to Macclesfield Grammar School. (*Cal. Pat., 1550–3*, p. 361. Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation*, pt. II, p. 24.)

[2] The " Works Chantry " in St. Mary, Lincoln, for the souls of contributors to the fabric was founded ante 1206. (Hill, *Medieval Lincoln*, p. 113.) There were at least nine chantry priests serving in York Minster in the thirteenth century. (Thompson, in *V.C.H., York*, vol. III, p. 42.)

[3] One of them at the altar of St. Leonard in the abbey church, and the other at the altar of the Virgin in the parish church of St. Bridget. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 577.) Arneway was, of course, the celebrated mayor of Chester, who is supposed to have been the moving spirit in the foundation of the mystery plays. His grant to the monks also included property in Bridge Street and Northgate Street. (Harl. 2071, f. 70.c.)

[4] Philip, in the name of his wife Isabella, baroness of Malpas, had carried on a long suit with the monks in an attempt to recover from them the manors of Saighton, Huntington, Chevely and Boughton. In 1281, he had surrendered this claim for a bond of £200. (*Morris*, p. 121.)

century, the monks had gone out of favour, but similar agreements were made with the nuns by Cecilia de Compton, in 1353,[1] and by the widow of Robert de Parys, a former chamberlain of Chester, in 1379,[2] the nuns undertaking, in both instances, to find fit secular chaplains.

Similar foundations were frequently made in secular collegiate churches, and, of all Chester churches, St. John's was the most popular with chantry founders. The so-called Thornton chantry was founded there in 1350 by Sir Peter le Rutter, the lord of the manor of Thornton le Moors. In that year, the dean and chapter established a perpetual chantry in their church for Peter's soul, in acknowledgement of his grant of the church of Stoke to augment their revenues. The two chantry chaplains were to be chosen by the dean, they were to be paid out of the common fund of the chapter, and, in addition to the services of the chantry, they were " to celebrate the canonical hours as though they were vicars of the said church ".[3] There were a large number of other chantries in St. John's, perhaps as many as eight,[4] but little is known about any of them.

The foundation of chantry services, whether temporary or permanent, in parish churches, appears to have been rather uncommon in Chester in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, so far as the evidence goes, few well-endowed or permanent chantries were ever so established.

In 1433,[5] William Troutbeck, esq., of the family of Dunham on the Hill, began to build a chapel at the end of the south aisle of St. Mary's, where he and several of his descendants were subsequently buried,[6] and in 1444, he founded a chantry there.[7] The endowments of this chantry, which consisted of £5 6*s.* 8*d.* in rents from " lands within the city of Chester ",[8] were granted by Troutbeck to his heirs, in trust for the provision of " one fit and proper champlain ".[9] There were two or three other chantries in this church in the late fifteenth century,[10] and there was also, at the dissolution, a " stipend " in the church of St. Michael, valued at £4 per annum, and similarly made up of rents from city properties.[11]

[1] Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 146. Cecily came of a local family, being described as a daughter of John de Daresbury, but her husband seems to have been a " foreigner ", perhaps of the west country family of that name. She had granted to the nuns all her lands and tenements in Northgate Street. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Second Series, p. 84.)

[2] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXI, p. 2. For details of Parys' career, see notes by Bennett, *ibid.*, p. 5 *et seq.*

[3] Lich Reg., vol. III, f. 128.

[4] *Cheshire Sheaf*, vol. XXIV, p. 41.

[5] See the agreement with the mason. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 41.)

[6] Earwaker, *St. Mary's*, p. 32.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[8] P.R.O., Rentals & Surveys, 6/24, f. 28. Earwaker (*op. cit.*, p. 32) mentions also lands in Woodchurch, Little Christleton and Ledsham, but it would appear that these lands had been lost to the chantry before its dissolution.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[11] P.R.O., Rentals & Surveys, 6/24, f. 28.

Perpetual services, even on this modest scale, were beyond the means of most middle-class citizens. In earlier times, they had provided for their spiritual well-being by bequeathing small donations for the prayers of the religious, especially the friars. In the fifteenth century, with the growth of a more individualistic religious spirit, the foundation of temporary chantries becomes a very common feature of testamentary dispositions. So far as one can determine from surviving wills, however, the popularity of this form of bequest was a late development in Chester. Out of twenty wills, surviving from the period 1382–1496, only four include arrangements for prayers for the testator, which can be regarded as the foundation of temporary chantries. In the last fifty years before the Reformation, by contrast, foundations of this kind had become the most popular form of all pious bequests, and are found in about one-third of all surviving wills.[1] Even in 1542, when it had become clear that the government would not long allow such services to continue, at least eight [2] stipendiary chaplains were employed in Chester churches, presumably under the terms of recent wills.

The testator who wished to set up a chantry usually expressed his intentions in a simple and conventional form of words. An " honest priest " was to be found to sing for his soul, and for all faithful souls, at such and such a favourite altar in one of the parish churches. He was to be paid a fixed sum, usually about £4 or £5 [3] per annum, either for a given term of years or as long as the money, bequeathed for this purpose, should last. Most commonly, the service was to be maintained for only one or two years,[4] but foundations intended to last for five, eight or ten years were by no means unusual.[5] There would not normally be any difficulty in finding chaplains to undertake these services. Chester, like all medieval towns, was always full of underworked priests eager for such employment. At the same time, the rectors of the larger parish churches, St. Mary's, St. Peter's and Holy Trinity, provided out of their own pockets for the assistance of a parochial chaplain,[6] and, no doubt,

[1] Fifteen out of thirty-nine.

[2] A List of Clergy in the Diocese of Chester 1542, in *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. XXXIII, p. 1 *et seq.* This total takes no account of chaplains maintained by fraternities or in the service of long established permanent chantries. There were five stipendiaries in St. Oswald's, which presumably also includes the abbey, one in St. Mary's on the Hill, one in St. Peter's, and one in St. Olaf's. There is no mention, in this list, of chantry priests at St. John's, as they seem to have been excluded since Bishop Lee's " ordering " of the church. (See above, page 57.)

[3] See above, page 14.

[4] e.g. for one year, Thos. Middleton (1535), Ralph Davenport (1505) ; for two years, Robert Schot (1408), Randle Brereton (1537).

[5] Nicholas Deykyn (1518), five years ; Wm. Rogerson (1519), six years or more ; Thomas Dedwood (1497), 7 years ; John Hawarden (1496), ten years ; Margaret Hawarden, his widow (1521), ten years.

[6] At least in the sixteenth century. See note 2, above.

these men constituted a permanent " pool " of reliable priests, who were at liberty to celebrate chantry masses. St. John's was especially favoured by the founders of these temporary services. Not only was it sanctified by the presence of the Rood, it possessed, also, a larger number of chantry altars than any other. The large staff of cantarists and vicars choral, under collegiate discipline, could be more readily trusted for a literal performance of their prayer obligations than could the small staffs of the other churches. The value of the " obit " lands [1] is a sufficient testimony of their popularity and the vicars also benefited from occasional testamentary gifts.[2]

Almost certainly, the motive which was usually uppermost in the mind of the chantry founder was the one most commonly expressed. He chose this form of bequest simply because it offered the cheapest, safest and most conventional way of ensuring that a large number of masses should be said for the repose of his soul. It is not cynical, however, to suppose that more mundane motives may also have played a part in determining his action. A chantry was the kind of enduring monument which solid citizens like to leave behind them, and a gentleman who was proud of his race, might wish, as William Troutbeck evidently did, to provide a family burial place for himself and his descendants, which would be worthy of their rank.

The chantry was popular with an increasingly literate laity, because it offered more room, than did a simple donation to an existing foundation, for an expression of personal piety, and of individual eccentricities of devotion. All founders named the altar at which they desired their service to be celebrated. Very many left further particulars of the

[1] See above, pages 13 and 56.

[2] In his will, dated 25 Aug., 1518, Nicholas Deykyn of Chester, felt capper, expressed his wish to be buried in " Saint Kateryn's Ile within the college church of St. John of Chester nygh unto my wife ", and bequeathed £45 to an " honest priest and weldisposed to syng for me and my wyfe and all Xpen Souls V years at the auter of Saint Kateryn within the College Church aforesaid ". Richard Sherman, priest (he was one of the vicars), to sing for the same souls at the Rood altar on specified occasions during the next eight years. After those years, he should " syng at Saint Kateryn's Auter during all his lyfe thrise a weke, that is to witt upon every, Sonday, Wennesday and Fryday ", and after his decease another priest, one of the vicars of the said college, should " syng in like manner, for which I will that the said Sir Richard Sherman, shall have all the profits of my mease place wherein I dwell to his owne use, and after his decease all such other priests, being one of the said vicars, as shall fortune to syng for me and my wyfe . . . except all such profits as I have given out of the said meas place to the said college for my obite ". In 1538, Alexander Standish left eight marks to the vicars of the college for a mass and dirige. The probability seems to be that, while outside priests were sometimes engaged to celebrate " private " masses in St. John's, most of the services for the dead were celebrated by the vicars themselves, who thus derived most of the profits from this source.

masses to be said,[1] and they could, if they wished, draw up detailed instructions, as did Robert Parys, of the form of service to be followed.[2] A place could be found for the merest personal whim, as, for example, in the will of Dr. Thomas Sparke, who bequeathed his own missal to the priest who was to sing for his soul.

It has been frequently observed that a chantry foundation often offered the testator an economical means of providing for a clerical member of his family. Chester citizens were not unmindful of this circumstance, and examples of such arrangements do occur,[3] but they are not sufficiently numerous to suggest that it contributed materially to the popularity of the chantry.

We shall, in fact, never understand the part played by the chantries in the religious life of the time if we regard these foundations simply as expressions of pious self-regard, for they were always something more than that. The spiritual benefit of the prescribed services was never limited to the founder and his near kin. There is no just reason for supposing that the invariable reference to " all Christian souls " was a mere form of words, and the king, the bishop, the head of the convent concerned, and other persons, were not infrequently named.[4] Nor were the chantry masses thought of as being in any sense private. " It was

[1] Thus, it was ordained, in the case of the Orreby chantry, that one of the cantarists was to celebrate daily a mass of the Virgin, and the other for the dead. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 152.) The two priests of the Thornton chantry were to celebrate the mass of the Cross and of the Virgin respectively. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 353.) Cecilia de Compton directed that her chaplain was to celebrate daily the mass of the Virgin " cum nota ". (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 146.)

[2] Parys, or his widow, desired that the chaplain should celebrate in the nuns' church, before the altar of St. John the Baptist there. He was to celebrate on Sundays a mass of the Trinity, on Mondays of St. Mary, on Tuesdays of the dead (with *requiem eternam*, &c.), on Wednesdays of the Holy Spirit, on Thursdays likewise of the dead, on Fridays of the Cross, on Saturdays of St. Mary ; except on feasts which were greater doubles, when the office of these feasts had to be celebrated. On these excepted days, and on ordinary days when a mass for the dead was not said, the chaplain was to make special mention of the persons to be prayed for ; viz. for the departed in the collect " *Incline Domine aurem tuam* ", and for Alionore (Robert's widow), while she was still alive, in the collect " *Deus qui caritatis dona* ". (P.R.O., Chester, 38/25–7, quoted *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXI, p. 2.)

[3] Ralph Huxley (1514) willed that " my son Sir Thomas shall have 6 marks yearly to pray for my soul and for all Christian souls ". (Harl. 2079, f. 50.) In 1519, Alderman William Rogerson desired in his will that Sir Richard Rogerson should sing for his soul for six years or more. Only two of the cantarists of the Orreby chantry, Robert Brereton, presented 1474, and Peter Brereton, presented 1526, are known to have been related to the patrons.

[4] Thus the bishop of Lichfield is to be prayed for at the Thornton Chantry, while the celebrant at the Compton chantry, in the nuns' church, was to pray for the earls of Chester, past and present, for the bishop of Lichfield, for the prioress and for all nuns, past present and future, for the soul of Eva Doubleday and for all benefactors of the convent.

a frequent provision of chantry foundations that the mass should be said at daybreak, or before sunrise, in order that labourers and servants might attend before going to their work." [1] It was thought to be desirable for all Christian people to attend, if possible, a mass every day, and the proliferation of chantry services answered a genuine public need.

Some chantry founders, at least, consciously sought to make provision for the spiritual needs of the community in general. Enough has been said to make it clear that the Orreby and Thornton chantries were deliberately founded to augment the inadequate resident staff of the collegiate church. All chantry priests were, of course, required to assist in the services of the church in which their chantry was situated,[2] and it is not a very bold supposition that the founders of other Chester chantries, of which we have less knowledge, were motivated in part by a desire to bring relief to the overworked parish clergy.[3]

A chantry service which was not a benefice, however perpetual it might be in name, was in constant danger of being allowed to lapse, either through the genuine devaluation of its endowments or the dishonesty of the patron. Most founders of chantries were well aware of this danger and solicitous to overcome it. It was probably for this reason that most of the permanent chantries in Chester were situated in the conventual churches, or in St. John's. If the responsibility for the maintenance of the service were placed upon heirs or trustees, it must inevitably be passed on, in the course of years, to the shoulders of lay individuals who had never known the founder personally. Not only was it less likely that the corporate patrons would neglect their charge, but negligence on their part, if it did occur, was more readily observed and more easily remedied.

As a further insurance, benefactors sought to obtain confirmation of foundation agreements from as high a spiritual authority as possible. The agreements of Statham with the Carmelites, and of Dame Torbok [4] with the Dominicans, were concluded with the assent, not only of the prior, but of the whole convent, and they were further reinforced by the confirmation of the provincial chapters of the orders concerned. The

[1] Wood-Legh, " Some Aspects of the History of Chantries ", *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.*, Fourth Series, vol. XXVIII, p. 49.

[2] In 1444, Archbishop Kemp required guild and chantry chaplains to read the lessons, epistles and gospels at High Mass as might be assigned to them by the parish priests, and to spend their vacant time at their books and not in certain specified improper pursuits. Westlake, *Parish Guilds of Medieval England*, p. 47.

[3] Cardinal Gasquet (*Parish Life*, p. 266) quotes a number of instances from Hampshire to show that much of the money issuing from chantry endowments was distributed to the poor. There is no evidence of this practice in Chester.

[4] It was agreed that every prior, within eight days of entering office, should appoint a friar to celebrate the service, and should afterwards appoint another in case of any change, under pain of excommunication.

Parys and Compton chantries were established under indentures entered into by the prioress and the whole chapter, and, in the latter case, episcopal confirmation was also sought.[1] The bishop also accepted ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of the Arneway [2] and Thornton chantries.

In some instances, the support of the secular authorities too was obtained. We have already noticed the keen interest taken by the Black Prince in the maintenance of the Orreby chantry,[3] and the municipal government saved at least one service from falling into disuse. In about 1270, the abbot had agreed with John Arneway to maintain a chantry service in the church of St. Bridget, and " to be responsible for the same to his diocesan, on the complaint of the mayor of Chester ".[4] In 1476, the abbot was bound in £20 to the chamberlain of Chester, to find a priest for St. Bridget's church, as the parishioners had claimed of his predecessor under the convent seal,[5] and it was no doubt through the interest of the city authorities that this chantry survived until the dissolution.[6] Again, we may notice the reference to the parishioners as another clear indication of the public functions of the chantries. The Parys chantry in the nunnery was secured by a similar arrangement, it being agreed by the prioress and chapter that if, through their negligence, the service should cease for more than two months, a fine of £5 might be levied upon them by the earl of Chester.[7]

It must, of course, be remembered that information respecting these particular chantries has survived precisely because such precautions were taken to ensure their permanence. We cannot guess how many chantries were founded without these formalities, and were subsequently permitted to lapse unnoticed. The procedure involved was, no doubt, expensive and, naturally, it was not resorted to by founders who intended their services to be continued for only ten years or less. It is emphasized here because it demonstrates so clearly both the spiritual significance

[1] The lady Cecilia de Compton may also have had the permanence of her foundation in mind, when she included the bishop and the nuns, past and present, among its spiritual beneficiaries.

[2] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 577

[3] See above, page 74.

[4] *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 577.

[5] Harl. 2147, f. 31.

[6] In the List of Diocesan Clergy 1542, one of the priests at St. Bridget's is said to be Richard Lowther " ex stipendio Johannis Arundell ", evidently an error for Arneway. The Dissolution Survey of the Abbey (*Dugdale*, vol. II, p. 393) mentions, among the expenses of the abbey, the wages of Richard Lowther, priest at the church of St. Bridget, and the chapter of the new cathedral was subsequently burdened with this charge. (*Ibid.*, p. 380.) In 1560, a pension was being paid to the former cantarist. (Account of Crown Revenues, 1559–60, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXV, p. 85.)

[7] See above, page 104. Cf. the powers of supervision over chantry chaplains exercised by the mayor of Bristol. (Wood-Legh, *op. cit.*, p. 59.) Secular control was also a notable feature of chantry foundation in Germany. (*Ibid.*, p. 57.)

which the founders themselves attached to these services, and the important place which they occupied in the religious life of the community as a whole.

The extent to which benefactions of all kinds were made specifically in exchange for prayers is emphasized by the change that gradually becomes observable in wills from about 1537. Even in Chester, by that date, the seeds of religious revolution had begun to sprout. The breach with Rome was seen to foreshadow more radical changes in the shape of English religion. An Act of 1531 [1] declared void all perpetual conveyances of land to parish churches or fraternities and made twenty years the maximum period for such conveyances. It may not have reflected popular doubts about the efficacy of prayers for the dead, but it must have served as a clear warning to the cautious testator that there was very little hope of any prayer-contract being fulfilled.

The result was the gradual disappearance of all kinds of religious bequest, which is nearly complete by the first years of Elizabeth's reign.[2] Their place is taken, in the will of the wealthy citizen, by public benefactions, in which we can see the traditional desire to be " had in memory " translated into purely secular terms.[3]

[1] 23 Hen. VIII, cap. 10.

[2] Cf. the numerous Elizabethan wills printed by Piccope and Irvine.

[3] Cf. the following inscribed under a portrait in the Town Hall, Chester. " Wm. Offley sheriff of this city anno 1517 by two wifes had 26 children . . . Robert the elder by the 2nd wife . . . citizen of London bequeathed £500 to charitable uses in this city with a yearly exhibition of £5 for the sustenance of a scholar in the University, being the son of a Freeman of this city and 5 pounds towards the charge of his commencing M.A." Another son Hugh, an alderman of London, is said to have left £200, with a yearly rent of £5, " to charitable uses in this city ". William, another son, citizen of London, left £300 to the same purpose. John Rogers, son of Alderman Ralph Rogers of Chester, who had also settled in London, " gave a cup of silver gilt for the use of the mayor for the time being ". (Harl. 1944, f. 61.)

CHAPTER VI

POPULAR RELIGION

LITTLE has yet been said of the spiritual content of religion, and the part which it played in the daily life of the people. To understand this aspect of our subject we must overleap, in imagination, the profound changes which took place in the Englishman's attitude to his religion in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and which make a sympathetic appreciation of pre-existing conditions most difficult for the modern student, who has been brought up in the protestant tradition.

The authority of the church pervaded every aspect of life. The little city was crowded with churches, and with priests, monks and friars. The citizen was reminded of his religious duties at every turn, by the numerous wayside crosses,[1] and by the constant clamour of the bells.[2] If he had received any formal education, it was at the song school or the grammar school attached to the collegiate church. (The latter was probably at one time a superior example of its type, but it was allowed to lapse sometime in the fifteenth century.)[3] If he were stricken by ill-health or poverty, he was dependent upon alms distributed either by the religious, or by parochial chaplains under the terms of pious bequests, while if permanently disabled he might be cared for in a "hospital", which was organized as a religious community. It was to the saints of the church that he turned in the difficulties of his earthly life, and it was, above all, upon the prayers of the church that he depended for the well-being of his soul after death.

[1] Cf. *Morris*, pp. 83, 252.

[2] All the parish churches possessed bells, as appears from the inventory of church goods taken in 1553. St. John's, St. Mary's, St. Peter's and Holy Trinity, each had peals of four or five bells. (Ball, *Church Plate*, p. 8 *et seq.*)

[3] Mr. A. F. Leach (*Schools of Medieval England*, p. 78) speaks of St. John's "standing on its fortified mound by the river with its ancient school in connection with it", but he cites no authorities. The writings of the twelfth-century monk Lucian, who received his early education there, reveal a wide acquaintance with the classics and an almost exhaustive knowledge of the text of scripture. He describes the canons as an enlightened band of clerks. (*Liber Luciani*, ed. Taylor, pp. 11, 13, and 41.) Mention is made of the music and grammar schools in the visitation of 1353 (Lich. Reg., vol. III, f. 133), where the master is instructed to take the scholars to certain of the services. The music school was held in "the chapel commonly called the white chapel, founded in honour of the Virgin in the cemetery of the said church". Grant, 1368, to Mr. John de Whiteby, clerk, of the care and rule of a grammar school in the town of Chester. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 120.) We hear nothing of these schools, however, in later times, and the foundation of the King's School by Henry VIII suggests that the earlier one had disappeared.

Medieval religion, for whatever reason, was truly popular. The feasts of the church were the general holidays of the people. The religious processions which took place on those holidays, notably that of Corpus Christi, were something more than public expressions of, and incitements to devotion. They were traditional features of annual festivities, something to be looked forward to and relished, like Easter eggs and Shrovetide pancakes. The three-day pageant of the mystery plays at Whitsun must have been the social event of the year, in an age which knew little of popular entertainment.

The later bourgeois ideal of personal piety centred upon the home was unthinkable to the citizen of fifteenth-century Chester, who enjoyed but little domestic privacy in the mean and crowded conditions of medieval town life. His material and educational standards were such that he was, of necessity, dependent, in his religious exercises as well as in his holiday diversions, upon those public and corporate activities in which he joined with his neighbours. The Christian faith was presented to him in an objectivized and externalized form, in the annual round of public, ecclesiastically directed, ceremonies of the church's year, and in the altars, images and mural decorations [1] by which his parish church was sanctified and adorned.

The parish churches, then, were the centres of all lay piety, but we must not think of them as being self-sufficient, independent entities, having little or no intercourse with one another. The town was sufficiently small for all its inhabitants to be mutually acquainted. None of the churches stood further than a few minutes' walk from any man's house. The individual citizen, of course, had legal obligations to the church and the parson of the parish in which he happened to live, but he was equally bound by ties of sentiment and veneration to all the principal churches of the city.[2] Many of the neighbouring gentry, too, were linked by family associations to one of the city churches, and, not infrequently, they took the lead in parochial affairs.

It is possible, to some extent, to differentiate the several positions occupied by these churches in the public regard. St. Peter's seems to have been recognized by the municipal authorities as the principal city church, doubtless because of its central position, and because of its proximity to the pentice court. There was, at least in the seventeenth century, a pew reserved for the use of the mayor,[3] and in our period

[1] Remains of mural paintings have been discovered in the cathedral, St. John's, St. Mary's, and St. Peter's. (Simpson, *St. Peter's*, p. 49.) Holy Trinity may have been similarly decorated as the church was whitewashed in 1544. (Beresford, "The Churchwardens' Accounts of Holy Trinity", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXVIII, p. 97.)

[2] Many citizens made small bequests to most of the parish churches (e.g. Mrs. Hawarden).

[3] *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXVI, p. 85.

the maintenance of the church clock was a regular charge upon the city's finances.[1]

Similarly, it was natural that St. Mary's, contiguous as it is to the castle, should have been closely associated with the administration of the palatinate. A succession of rectors, in the fourteenth century, were prominent figures in that administration, and the church itself was frequently the scene of judicial business.[2] St. Mary's was the wealthiest and most fashionable of the parish churches. The record of the stained glass formerly in the church, with its inscriptions and armorial bearings, shows that many prominent local people were buried there in pre-reformation times, when burial was always a noteworthy source of ecclesiastical income.[3] In particular, it owed much to the favour of the Troutbeck family, which possessed a house in Castle Lane.[4]

To some extent, its popularity was rivalled by that of Holy Trinity. In this church many of the leading merchants chose to be buried,[5] and in this parish were situated the town houses of a number of local gentlemen.[6] It also included some less favoured dwellings in the port area, and may, perhaps, be distinguished as the sailors' parish.[7] St. John's, of course, occupied a unique place in the religious life of the neighbourhood through its possession of the Rood, and the collegiate church also constituted the headquarters of the local ecclesiastical administration [8] which was so often under the archidiaconal direction of one of the canons.

There is abundant evidence that the preservation and adornment of these churches was a matter of prime concern to the citizens, both individually and corporately. In most if not all Chester churches, the

[1] Harl. 2150, f. 290. An indenture of 2 Ed. VI between the mayor and James Watmogh, of Prescot, Lancs., for the clock and chimes to be kept in order for ten shillings per annum. The writer has also noticed an item of expenditure on the "*orlogium Ecclesie Sancti Petri*", in one of the Mayor's Books of the time of Edward IV. Similar arrangements still existed in Elizabeth I's reign. (*Morris*, p. 170.)

[2] Earwaker, *St. Mary's*, p. 27.

[3] There were memorials in the church of the families of Troutbeck, Davenport, Brereton, Rixton, Savage and Ellis of Overleigh. (*Ibid.*, p. 33 *et seq.*)

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 183 *et seq.* *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 55.

[5] In the sixteenth century there were memorials there to at least four former mayors, John de Whitmore, Thomas Wooton, Henry Gee and Edmund Gee. (Farrell, *Parish Registers of Holy Trinity*.)

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[7] In the parish registers "sailor" occurs more frequently than any other trade or craft. (*Ibid.*, p. 2.) These registers date only from the mid-sixteenth century, but the sea-going element in the district must have been equally, if not more, important in earlier times.

[8] It was there, for example, that ordinations were usually carried out by the bishop or one of his suffragans. (*Morris*, p. 146.) In the sixteenth century, wills were usually proved there before the archdeacon's official (*Piccope*, vol. I, pp. 5, 6, 8, 19, etc.), and inquisitions re advowsons usually held there. e.g. 1380, the church of Davenham (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 185), 1430, that of St. Mary on the Hill. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 120.)

churchwardens administered a permanent fabric fund,[1] since it was, of course, the obligation of the parishioners to maintain the fabric of the nave. The last years of the fifteenth century were a time of unprecedented building activity, when the citizens, perhaps inspired by the example of the black monks, reconstructed almost all the parish churches.

The chapter of St. John's was constantly engaged on repairs and extensions of the fabric, and, in these operations, they must have had to rely, very largely, on the financial support of the parishioners. They were engaged in releading the roof in 1463, and again, apparently, in 1471.[2] From 1518 to 1523, the north-west tower was being rebuilt, and the canons granted the parishioners the free use of the bells for their assistance in this work.[3]

The well-known agreement with the abbot for the enlargement of St. Nicholas' chapel dates from 1488,[4] while St. Mary's was virtually rebuilt in the same decade.[5] In 1490, also, the steeple of St. Peter's was " new poynted, and a goose eaten up on the top by the parson and others, of which parts were thrown into the four streets ".[6] The great steeple of the Carmelite church, a landmark which guided ships entering the harbour,[7] was built, or rebuilt, in 1495.[8] The chancel of St. Michael's, with its beautiful timber roof, is attributable to the same year.[9] Further important repairs to St. Mary's were carried out in the reign of Henry VIII, and a new aisle was built in St. Peter's, 1535–8.[10] On one occasion, at least, the mayor himself took the initiative in these operations,[11] and the parishioners sometimes showed considerable enterprise in the beautification of their churches. In 1535, when the abbey of Basingwerk near Holywell was dissolved, the parishioners of St. Mary's purchased the roof of the choir and had it put in their own church,[12] and a few years later a porch was built on the north side of the same church with stone

[1] 1415, " Noverint &c. John de Preston and Richard de Hatton citizens of Chester, bailiffs, receivers, collectors, supervisors, and governors, of all monies, profit and legacies for the fabric of the church of St. Peter in Chester, with the assent of all parishioners of the said parish, acknowledge to have received from John Savage esq. £10 of silver, in the names of the said parishioners (for the sale of certain properties bequeathed to the church) ". (Aston deeds, No. 76a, quoted *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXI, p. 39.)

[2] Burne, " The Falling Towers of St. John ", *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. XXXVI, pt. I, p. 14.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[4] Harl. 2103, f. 25. The parishioners appear to have borne all the expense.

[5] As appears from wills of Heuster, Dedwood and John Hawarden.

[6] Annals of Chester, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXIX, p. 72.

[7] Morris, p. 147.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Oct., 1538, an agreement between the churchwardens and the mayor and aldermen, concerning the building of certain shops adjoining the church, mentions that the new aisle had then been recently completed. (Harl. 2131, f. 92.)

[11] The then mayor heads the list of parishioners of St. Oswald's who concluded with the abbot the indenture of 1490. (Harl. 2103, f. 25.)

[12] Earwaker, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

which came from the ruins of the nunnery.[1] The fifteenth century, especially the latter half, was a famous period of church building in many parts of England,[2] but the fact that the people of Chester were so active in this way, during the very period when their town touched the nadir of its economic fortunes, is a significant illustration of their scale of values. It detracts nothing from their intentions that their labours were, not infrequently, nullified by the poor quality of the workmanship and of the materials employed.[3]

The furnishings of the parish churches were also provided, very largely, out of the pockets of the parishioners. Most testators left cloth or money for this purpose, and the inventory of church goods, compiled by the royal commissioners of 1553, shows that all the churches were adequately provided for. All of them, except St. Martin's and St. Olaf's, were then found to be possessed of more than the bare minimum of furnishing which the churchwardens were permitted to retain. The superfluous plate and vestments of St. Oswald's were sold for the considerable sum of £4 11*s.* 2*d.*, while those of St. Mary's fetched the very large sum of £10 13*s.* 6*d.*, which more than equalled that of all the others together.[4] If he could afford it, the Chester citizen made arrangements for an elaborate memorial in his parish church, and most churches were crowded with funerary monuments and decorated by memorial windows of stained glass. In the larger churches the services of the greater feasts, especially Christmas and Easter, were elaborately dramatized, often at considerable expense.[5]

There is surprisingly little direct evidence from Chester of that cult of relics which has been described as the true religion of the middle ages. Miraculous cures were sometimes attributed to a visit to the shrine of St. Werburgh in the abbey,[6] and her girdle " was in great request by lying-in women ".[7] The nuns, for their part, possessed a girdle of St. Thomas of Canterbury,[8] but all these relics were quite overshadowed by the Rood of St. John's, and there is nothing to indicate that they attracted much popular devotion.

The growth of town life, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, fostered the development of corporate social organization among relatively humble people, and, in particular, the craft guilds. It is typical of the

[1] Earwaker, *op. cit.*, p. 4. [2] Cf. Gasquet, *Parish Life*, pp. 28 and 29.

[3] Within twelve months of the repairs at St. Peter's, noticed above, there was a serious fall of stone from the tower. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXIX, p. 72.) In 1597, " the spire of St. Peter's steeple, which was fourteen yards long, was taken down, for it was like to fall ". (Harl. 2125, in *Morris*, p. 170.) The north-west tower of St. John's fell some time in the fifteenth century, and, after being rebuilt, *c.* 1520, fell again in 1573. (Burne, *op. cit.*, p. 15.)

[4] Ball, *Church Plate*, p. 3 *et seq.*

[5] *Lyfe of St. Werburge*, ed. Hawkins, p. 161 *et seq.*

[6] *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. X, p. 141. [7] *Ibid.* [8] *Ibid.*

integration of religion with everyday life that these guilds were combinations for religion as well as economic purposes. Indeed, it is to their enthusiastic devotion to the church that we owe the most eloquent survival of popular devotion which has come down to us from medieval Chester.

There is no occasion here to enter upon a detailed account of the famous mystery plays, as they have already formed the subject of numerous works of scholarship.[1] The elaboration of the three-day pageant in the form which has survived was probably the work of Edward III's reign, the period which saw the apogee of Chester's medieval prosperity,[2] while credit for the composition, or adaptation, of the plays must almost certainly be given to one or more of the monks of St. Werburgh's. The Chester play-cycle is the oldest of its kind still extant, and, while less interesting as literature than those of Coventry, Wakefield or York, is distinguished from them by a deeper tone of religious solemnity.

It was customary for the guilds to assist at the obsequies of dead members,[3] and sometimes they also maintained an altar of their own. A will of 1408 mentions the " carpenters' light " [4] in the church of the white friars, while, in the sixteenth century, the guild of founderers and pewterers and that of the smiths combined to maintain the services of a chapel dedicated to " St. Loye ", presumably St. Eligius, the patron saint of metal-workers.[5] For the craft guilds, in Chester as elsewhere, the great religious occasion of the year was the feast of Corpus Christi. This festival began to be universally observed in the early years of the fourteenth century, and soon became, in most English towns, the principal holiday of the guilds, and the occasion of the annual performance of the mystery plays.[6] The religious authorities frowned upon this last development, as one tending to obscure the spiritual significance of the feast,[7] and in Chester their opposition appears to have been effective, as the mystery pageant here was always performed at Whitsun, the Corpus Christi observances consisting of purely religious processions, in which lighted candles were carried by representatives of the several crafts.[8]

[1] Mathews, *The Chester Miracle Plays*. The standard text is edited by the same author, *E.E.T.S.*, vol. CXV. For a full bibliography of this subject see Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 213.

[2] Chambers (*op. cit.*, p. 24) gives 1327 as a likely approximate date of origin.

[3] The Smith's book for 1546 has an entry : " For Wax Candles at buringe Roger Sprag's wife, 1*d*. Payd to the preste, xiiis. iiii*d*." (*Morris*, p. 352.)

[4] That of Robert Schot, carpenter.

[5] *Morris*, pp. 349–50. The location of this chapel appears to be unknown.

[6] Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 18.

[7] W. and L. Townsend, *Mystery and Miracle Plays in England*, p. 19.

[8] In the mid-sixteenth century, however, plays were sometimes performed by priests at this festival, though presumably in a more reverent spirit than could be expected on the occasion of the ordinary mystery pageant. (Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 20.)

It is again typical of the age that this ceremony became an occasion of craft rivalry,[1] and that, on one occasion, at least, it was " captured " by the journeymen and turned into a sort of trade union demonstration against the masters.[2]

On the other hand, while the care and expense lavished by the guilds upon the mystery plays may have been inspired in large measure by craft rivalry and holiday spirit, the subject-matter of these performances served, at the same time, to keep the teachings of their religion ever before men's minds.

The object of the important religious guilds was a purely spiritual one, the support of the members, in life and death, by mutual prayer, and the augmentation of the services of the churches to which they were attached. From 1361 until its dissolution in 1547, the guild or fraternity of St. Anne maintained a chantry served by two chaplains in St. John's,[3] while that of St. George provided for services in a chapel in St. Peter's.[4] Collections were made, among the brethren of St. Anne, to pay for " obits " for deceased members.[5] The administration of guild affairs doubtless entailed some conviviality,[6] which may have provided an added incentive for membership, but there is no reliable evidence that these guilds ever performed any of the other functions sometimes attributed to them.[7]

In a rather different category was the guild or fraternity of St. Ursula,

[1] 1475. Award of the mayor in dispute between the coopers and the bowyers and fletchers over the carrying of Corpus Christi lights. (*Morris*, p. 572.)

[2] In 1358, there was, on Corpus Christi day, a " terrible affray ", outside St. Peter's church, when a large crowd of weavers, shermen, challoners and walkers made an attack upon their journeymen. (*Ibid.*, p. 405.) The disturbances which are said to have occurred at the festival in 1423 (*ibid.*, p. 50), and 1494 (*ibid.*, p. 62) may have had their origin in similar economic jealousies.

[3] *Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 409 ; *Gastrell*, p. 102.

[4] Raines (*Gastrell*, p. 99) says that the chapel of the fraternity was probably in St. Bridget's, but he is in error. There was a chapel dedicated to St. George in St. Peter's (Harl. 2150, f. 248, quoted Bennett, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXI, p. 63), which was almost certainly the fraternity chapel, as appears from the clergy list of 1542. (*Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. XXXIII.) It was then served by two chaplains.

[5] Accounts of the fraternity, 5–6 Hen. IV (P.R.O., Sc. 11/890), include an item: 13*s*. 4*d*. to the vicars (of St. John's) for obits.

[6] The same accounts mention expenditure on ale and wine at the last presentation of accounts, which was held, it appears, in the house of one of the wardens. (*Ibid.*)

[7] The frequent references to a hospital of St. Anne (e.g. *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXIII, p. 54) imply the existence of an almshouse in association with the fraternity. In fact, the almshouses in St. John's lane were founded after the dissolution of the fraternity. (Harl. 2150, f. 289.) Nor was the guild of St. George responsible for the races held upon St. George's day, as implied in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXI, p. 63, as the race was only instituted in 1609. (Harl. 1948, f. 63.) Nor does *Morris's* assertion (p. 339) that this guild was responsible for the promotion of archery appear to rest on any better foundations.

which was founded by royal licence in June, 1510. It was closely associated with the hospital, or almshouses, of the same dedication, which had been established, some three years earlier, under the will of Roger Smith, and the support of that foundation was, doubtless, its principal object.[1] All these guilds were legal persons, which could sue and be sued in the city courts.[2] Their affairs were in the hands of two stewards or wardens, elected from among their number. Sometimes one of these was a priest, but never both, for, while not anticlerical, the guilds were largely secular in composition. Though probably declining in popularity, the guilds continued to be influential throughout our period. Their membership included many leading citizens and the Fraternity of St. George had close links with the city government.[3]

There is one question which must always be present in the mind of the student of medieval church life. Remembering the sudden collapse of the old religious order in England, he will be watchful for portents of impending disaster. What evidence is there, he must ask, of decay and disintegration in the fabric of ecclesiastical institutions? What evidence is there of serious popular dissatisfaction with the teaching and practice of the church? Clear answers to these questions do not emerge from the study of religious life in Chester. There is nothing to suggest that there was, in Chester, any noteworthy body of heretical belief before the death of Henry VIII. There is no indication in the wills which have been examined of any decline in belief in the intercessions of the saints or in the efficacy of prayers for the dead. We find notice of only one citizen accused of heresy, and that in circumstances which suggest that he was not a militant protestant, but rather a petty malefactor who had defied the authority of the archdeacon's court.[4] In the parish churches, the old services continued virtually unchanged until the end of Henry's reign.[5] As is well known, the mystery plays were still performed in the reign of Elizabeth I.

[1] See the article on this fraternity by Mr. J. H. E. Bennett, in *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, vol. XXXII, pt. II, p. 98 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 104 (St. Ursula). The fraternity of St. Anne possessed its own seal (Harl. 2061, f. 7), and frequent references to the attorneys of this fraternity occur in the records of the city courts. The stewards of St. George also made occasional appearances in the mayor's court. (e.g. Mayor's Book, 16 Ed. IV, f. 9.)

[3] The names of the stewards of St. George are recorded annually in the Mayor's Books of the sixteenth century, where they are placed immediately after those of the mayor and aldermen and the "levelookers", almost as though they were, themselves, officials of the city.

[4] "One John Edwards, being accused and indicted of heresy by Sir Richard Ledsham (one of the vicars of St. John's) in the pentice of Chester, said and pronounced that there was of the best within the city of Chester of an evil dispocision and daily did worse than John Edwards. And further openly said that the said priest was a whoremaster priest." (Harl. 2093, f. 12.)

[5] As appears from the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary's on the Hill (Earwaker, *op. cit.*, p. 4), and from those of Holy Trinity. (Beresford, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–101.)

The dissolution of the monasteries represented, in fact, a less revolutionary change than might at first appear. As we have seen, almost all the considerable ecclesiastical properties, including even appropriated benefices, had passed, a generation or more previously in most cases, into the hands of lay farmers, and these farmers were very often representatives of the same county families who now became the legal owners of the property. At the same time, the endowments of the principal chantries reverted to the heirs of the founders. The path of the revolution had been made smooth by a long process of social change.

It is not surprising that few objections were raised to the dissolution of St. Werburgh's, but there appears to have been widespread local dissatisfaction at the suppression of the lesser religious houses.[1] No serious opposition, however, threatened the government, although one or two local notables were arrested for complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace,[2] and, by the reign of Elizabeth I, the city seems to have become largely protestant in spirit.[3] Must this peaceful transition be attributed to the efficiency of the Tudor despotism, or to grave hidden weaknesses in the old order ? The answer which we offer to this question must depend, in large measure, upon the interpretation which we place upon such evidence of local conditions as that assembled in this essay. Perhaps the religious revolution is to be understood rather as the outcome of a long-established Erastian habit of mind, prepared, within broad limits, to accept any form of church order imposed by the state, than as a reaction to widely recognized deficiencies in established institutions.

[1] Cf. Letter of Bishop Ingworth to Latimer. " The friars in these parts . . . have many favourers, and great labour is made for their continuance. Divers trust to see them set up again, and some have gone up (i.e. to Westminster) to sue for them." (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. XIII, pt. II, p. 67.) It must have been with the help of their friends, that the nuns had been able, in 1536, to pay a fine of £160, for the " tolerance and continuance " of their convent. (*Ibid.*, p. 177.)

[2] Randall Brereton, baron of the exchequer at Chester, and John Hall, merchant of Chester, are mentioned by *Morris* (p. 99.) There was, however, a considerable uprising at Norton, involving two or three hundred persons, under the leadership of the abbot, which might have spread dangerously but for the prompt repressive action of Sir Peter Dutton, the sheriff. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 683.)

[3] *Morris*, p. 82. But not entirely ! This author also remarks that there was a good deal of grumbling in the 1570's, when most of the crosses were pulled down.

APPENDIX A

Wills of Chester Citizens, and Wills which make Bequests to Chester Churches

1301. Thomas de Macclesfield. *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society*, vol. III, p. 1.
1306. William Danyers of Daresbury.* *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 354.
1348. John Bars. Harl. 2063, f. 134, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXI, p. 52.
1361. Randle Whitlof. *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society*, vol. XXX, p. 5.
1366. Roger de Swettenham. *Ibid.*, vol. XXX, p. 7.
1384. Thomas del Frere. Harl. 2061, f. 25a.
1389. William Walsham. P.C.C. 2. Rous, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 103.
1391. Nicholas d'Audley.* *Cal. of Wills, Court of Hustings*, p. 294.
1392. Sir Lawrence Dutton.* *Reliquary*, vol. XXIII, p. 101.
1397. John de Hatton. Harl. 2065, f. 5.
1401. William del Heath. P.R.O., Ancient Deeds, C. 5282.
1408. Robert Schot. Harl. 2061, f. 24.
1413. John Coly. Harl. 1991, f. 138, quoted *Morris*, p. 350.
1415. Adam Mottrum. *Reg. Chichele*, vol. II, p. 42.
1415. Sir Thomas Dutton. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
1418. Thomas de Cruwe. *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVII, p. 38.
1419. Edmund Holes of Watford. P.C.C. 47. Marche, *ibid.*, vol. XIX, p. 55.
1421. John Botiller. *Reg. Chichele*, vol. II, p. 89.
1423. Roger Horton. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
1437. Richard Fyton. P.C.C. 21. Luffenham, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 24.
1439. John Hope. P.C.C. 25. Luffenham in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVII, p. 105.
1467. Dame Cecilia de Torbok. Harl. 2176, f. 27, quoted by Baines, *History of Lancashire*, vol. V, p. 73.
1475. Ralph Brayen. *Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. XXX, p. 19.
1489. Richard Cholmondoley. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. LIV, p. 41.
1489. Nicholas Southworth. P.C.C. 19. Milles, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XIX, p. 4.
1492. John Croft. *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 85.
1496. John Hawarden. P.C.C. 5. Horne, *ibid.*, vol. XVII, p. 69.
1497. John Hanley. P.C.C. 13. Horne, *ibid.*, vol. XVII, p. 23.
1497. Thomas Dedwood. Harl. 2131, f. 205, quoted Earwaker, *St. Mary's*, p. 30.
1497. Dedwood (slightly different version). Harl. 1991, f. 233.
1499. John Norres. Harl. 2131, f. 106. *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXII, p. 62.
1499. Mathew Johnson or Heuster. P.C.C. 35. Horne, *ibid.*, vol. XVIII, p. 92.

1503. Richard Hawarden * of Winwick. Cooper Scott, *St. John Baptist*, p. 33.
1505. Henry Raynforde. P.C.C. 14. Adeane, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 93.
1505. Ralph Davenport. P.C.C. 16. Adeane, *ibid.*, vol. XXIII, p. 37.
1506. Margaret Smith. P.C.C. 8. Bennett, *ibid.*, vol. XV, p. 42.
1508. Roger Smith. P.C.C. 16. Bennett, *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, vol. XXXII, pt. II, p. 100.
1508. William Egerton.* P.C.C. 3. Fetiplace, *ibid.*, vol. XXIV, p. 27.
1508. Piers Whitley. P.C.C. 12. Bennett, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XIV, p. 73.
1511. Thomas Runcorn.* P.C.C. 6. Fetiplace, *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, vol. XXIV, p. 27.
1514. Ralph Huxley. Harl. 2079, f. 50.
1517. Christiana Calveley. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. LI, p. 132.
1518. Nicholas Deykyn. P.C.C. 11. Ayloffe, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XIV, p. 8.
1519. William Rogerson. P.C.C. 17. Ayloffe, *ibid.*, vol. XIII, p. 90.
1520. William Milnes. Harl. 2067, f. 45.
1521. Margaret Hawarden. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. LI, p. 6.
1522. John Myklowe. P.C.C. 26. Maynwaryng, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 94.
1523. Richard Broster. P.C.C. 11. Bodfelde, *ibid.*, Third Series, vol. XIV, p. 38.
1525. Richard Fletcher. Harl. 2099, f. 420.
1525. James Goodacre of Woodchurch. Harl. 2071, f. 1, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XX, p. 67.
1525. Ralph Egerton of Ridley. *Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 246.
1525. Henry Manley. Harl. 1991, f. 194.
1525. Alex Stuard. Harl. 2037, f. 202.
1526. William Danald. Harl. 2067, f. 5, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XX, p. 71.
1526. William Wigan. P.C.C. 10. Porch, *ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 31.
1527. Hugh Starkey. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. XXXIII, p. 5.
1527. Thos. Sparke. *Ibid.*, vol. XXXIV, p. 16.
1528. Elizabeth Hurleston. *Ibid.*, vol. XXXIII, p. 35.
1529. Roger Fletcher. P.C.C. 2. Jankyn, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 101.
1530. Thomas Ball. *Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. XXX, p. 168.
1530. Thomas Croughton. Chester Enrolment Books, *Cheshire Sheaf*, First Series, vol. I, p. 55.
1531. Jane Ley. Harl. 2067, f. 193.
1531. Ralph Lawton. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. LI, p. 183.
1535. Thomas Middleton. P.C.C. 32. Hogan, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 87.
1535. Hugh Robinson or Chamber. Harl. 1991, f. 148. *Ibid.*, vol. XXI, p. 9.
1536. Thomas Baxter. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. LIV, p. 45.
1537. John Barrow. P.C.C. 22. Hyngeley, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVI, p. 56.
1537. Randle Brereton. P.C.C. 8. Dyngeley, *ibid.*, vol. XVII, p. 30.
1538. Alexander Standish. P.C.C. 19. Dyngeley, *ibid.*, vol. XIII, p. 81.
1538. Robert Cliff. P.C.C. 8. Dyngeley, *ibid.*, vol. XVIII, p. 67.

1538. Randle Pole of Poole. P.C.C. 8. Dyngeley, *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Chesh.*, vol. LXV, p. 174.
1539. Ralph Rogers. P.C.C. 17. Crumwell, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 99.
1541. Robert Goulburne. Harl. 2079, f. 49.
1544. Katherine Brown. *Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. XXX, p. 169.
1547. Mathew Ellis. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
1548. David Middleton. P.C.C. 13. Populwell in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 88.
1548. Jane Chamber. Harl. 1991, f. 163. *Ibid.*, vol. XXI, p. 26.
1554. Robert Boware. *Chetham Soc.*, vol. LI, p. 266.
1557. Thomas Runcorne. P.C.C. 22. Wrastley, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 53.

Wills marked by an asterisk have not been seen in full.

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

I. Deans of St. John's

The following list is based upon that printed in *Ormerod*, vol. I. p. 307.

William de Byrcheles, said by Ormerod (vol. I, p. 307) to have been dean, 22–25 Ed. I (1293–7), and chamberlain of Chester, 1271–2. He occurs again as dean, March, 1299 (Tabley deeds, No. 88 [1]) and August, 1308, when he obtained a papal dispensation, as canon and prebendary of Coventry and Lichfield and St. Asaph, and holding also the church of Mold, united by the bishop of St. Asaph to the prebend of his cathedral, and the churches of Denton and Bletchley in the dioceses of Norwich and Lincoln, the total value of which livings amounted to £80, to retain them and to accept other benefices to the value of £40. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 42.)

Randle Torald, *dean*, 1309; admitted, 25 Sept., 1310, to the vicarage of Boudon (Bolderton ?), at the presentation of the prior and convent of Birkenhead. (Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 58.) He was probably related to the family of the manorial lords of Great Mollington. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 307.)

William Wish (or Wych), *dean*, 1311, re *Ormerod*, but the information he quotes from Harl. 2072 suggests that Wish was *dean of Christianity*, not dean of the collegiate church. (*Ibid.*)

Mr. Stephen de Kynardesley, presented by the king, 30 Jan., 1323, the temporalities of the bishopric having been in his hands at the death of the late dean. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 98.)[2]

Mr. Thomas de Clopton, instituted 14 April, 1325. He was keeper of the king's wardrobe, 1347–9. (*Tout*, vol. VI, p. 27.) Prof. Tout says that he was a Suffolk man related to the powerful administrative family of Northbur. (*Tout*, vol. IV, p. 119.) Dec., 1326, collated to the prebend of Flixton in Lichfield Cathedral. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 101.) March, 1328, exchanged for Bishopshill. (*Ibid.*) Resident in Lichfield from 1329–*c.*1340. (MS. Ashmole. 794.[3]) Dec., 1330, presented by the king to the church of Shiffnal, Salop (*Cal. Pat., 1330–4*, p. 25), and exchanged it, in the following Jan., for the church of Walton-on-the-Hill. (*Cal. Pat., 1330–4*, p. 40.)

[1] Communicated by Mr. Fergusson Irvine.

[2] Kynardesley was instituted to the vicarage of Castle Cary, Dec. 1348. (*Reg. Shrewsbury*, p. 559.)

[3] All the references to this manuscript, which is, in fact, the act book of the dean and chapter of Lichfield, have been kindly communicated by Mrs. H. Jenkins, who also drew my attention to a number of other references, in printed sources, which I would otherwise have missed. According to Mrs. Jenkins, the acts run from 1321–45, though very sketchy for the last five years of this period, and again from 1356–84. Evidently, we can never be sure whether or not a canon of Lichfield was resident during the period 1340–56.

In 1331, described as king's clerk (*ibid.*) employed to seize the benefices of non-resident aliens, and to visit and reform certain religious houses in that diocese. (e.g. *Cal. Pat., 1340–3*, p. 306.) He acted as taxer of the ninth in Staffordshire in 1340. (*Cal. Pat., 1340–3*, p. 26.) Became dean of Wimborne in Jan., 1349. (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 251.) Still rector of Walton in Jan., 1349, and patron of the vicarage of Walton. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 123.) He died 12 June, 1349. (*Ibid.*, f. 124.)

Mr. Nicholas de Northburg, resigned from the deanery before 4 June, 1329. Doubtless he, too, was related to the important family mentioned above, and to Roger de Northburg, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, 1321–58. Another Roger, nephew of the bishop, held a prebend in St. John's, 1338–54 (see below).

Mr. Peter Russel, *priest*, 4 June, 1329, until Oct., 1334. Occurs as parson of the church of Etton, Northamptonshire, in March, 1325 (*Cal. Pat., 1324–7*, p. 97), and April, 1327. (*Ibid., 1327–30*, p. 66.)

Mr. William de Appeltre, *clerk*, 7 Oct., 1334–before 19 June, 1339. In July, 1318, he was provided, at the request of the bishop of Lincoln, to a living in that diocese. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 171.) 1338–49, archdeacon of Stafford. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 571 ; *C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 340.) Prebendary of Tachbrooke, 1324–8 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 628), of Pipa Parva, 1340–1 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 619), of Dernford 1341–9 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 595), all in Lichfield cathedral. A prebend of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, was void by his death in 1349. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 191.) Resident at Lichfield from 1342 until at least 1345. (Ashmole. 794.)

Mr. John de Marisco (or Marsh), *clerk*, 19 June, 1339–4 June, 1353. He exchanged the deanery with Richard de Burmyngham for the archdeaconry of Stafford. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 275.) Nov., 1332, exchanged preb. Gnosall for Offley. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 151.) 1351, archdeacon of Derby. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 576.) In 1366, John Marrys, master in the art of dialectic, said to possess the prebend of Gaia Major, in Lichfield, where he had long resided, taxed at 10 marks, a prebend in the collegiate church of Penkridge, worth £10 per annum, and the church of Kingsley, Lichfield dio., taxed at ten marks. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 217.) Resident at Lichfield from at least 1356 until his death there in 1375. (Ashmole. 794.)

Mr. Richard de Burmyngham, *priest*, exchanged with Marisco as above, 4 June, 1353. Exchanged the deanery for the rectory of Irnham, Lincoln dio., 2 July, 1354 (*Cal. Pat., 1354–8*, p. 79), but occurs again as dean, Jan., 1357. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 133.) June, 1339, presented by the king to the vicarage of Wantage. (*Cal. Pat., 1338–40*, p. 256.) Archdeacon of Coventry, 1361–9. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, pp. 24 and 44.) 1361–ante 1394, prebendary of Pipa Minor, Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 618.) 1368, a visitor of the royal free chapels of Bridgenorth, Stafford, Wolverhampton, St. Mary, Shrewsbury, and Tettenhall (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 142), and of Bridgenorth again in 1379. (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 416.) He occurs as official and commissary of the bishop of Lichfield in 1361 (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 28), 1373 (*ibid.*, p. 49), and 1374 (*ibid.*, p. 176), and 1386, as vicar-general in spirituals. (Lich. Reg., vol. VI, f. 1.) Nov., 1369, he was collated to the church of Worfield, Shropshire, by the bishop. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 132.)

He resided in Lichfield from 1366 until his death in 1394 (Ashmole. 794. Lichfield Act Book.[1]) [2]

Hugh de Thrikyngham, exchanged with Burmyngham as above. 31 Jan., 1355, the pope granted the deanery to Alexander de Dalby, it being void because Hugh de Treckingham had obtained the church of Mold. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 276.) In 1353, Hugh was in the service of Queen Isabella. (*Ibid.*, p. 242.)

Alexander de Dalby, *clerk*, was granted the deanery by the pope in Jan., 1355, but it was still the subject of litigation between him and Thrikyngham in Sept., 1357. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, pp. 278–9.) Dalby had definitely won the case by Oct., 1362, when he obtained a dispensation from the bishop of Lichfield to be absent from his deanery for two years. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 162.) He is still described as dean of St. John's in May, 1366 (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 25), and the deanery was vacant in July, 1367 (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 115), so he must have resigned some time between these two dates. Dalby was a professional administrator in the royal service. In 1358, he was appointed to supervise certain repairs to the mint in the Tower of London. (*Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, p. 87.) In July, 1362 (*Cal. Clos., 1360–4*, p. 348), we find him engaged in certain Exchequer business. In 1363, he occurs as one of the clerks of the constable of Bordeaux. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 458.) 1366–8, he was constable of Bordeaux and died in the latter year. (*Tout*, vol. VI, p. 70.) In 1366, he was provided to a prebend of St. Paul's, and to a canonry of York with expectation of a prebend (*Papal Petitions*, pp. 511, 513), notwithstanding that he was dean of St. John's. In May, 1366 (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 25), the prince of Wales unsuccessfully petitioned the pope for his provision to the see of Bangor. A kinsman, Walter de Dalby, was also in the royal service. (*Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, pp. 49, 322.) Another relation may have been John de Dalby, mayor of Chester, 1365–6.

At this point there is considerable doubt as to the succession to the deanery. Ormerod gives **William de Blumenhull** in 1380, and **Richard de Scroop** in 1386. Blumenhull resigned from a prebend in 1381 (see below), but the writer knows of no evidence that he was ever dean. Scroop, the future archbishop, is said (Harl. 2155, f. 102) to have been dean of Chester at the time of his election to the see of Coventry and Lichfield, in 1386, but the reference is probably to the rural deanery of Chester. At any rate, it is certain that **John de Wodehouse** was dean from at least 1370 (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 49) to Aug., 1395, and in all probability he was Dalby's immediate successor. In April, 1370, having then only received the first tonsure, he obtained letters dismissory to all orders. (*Ibid.*) He occurs as dean in 1382 (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 116) and 1389 (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 743 n.). Chamberlain of Chester and North Wales, 1376–94. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 308 ; *Cooper Scott*, p. 37.) 1376–95, master of the hospital or chantry of St. Nicholas of Nantwich. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 449.) 1383, presented by the king to prebend of the free chapel of Tamworth. (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 332.) Ratified, Feb., 1386, as prebendary of Wellington, Lichfield. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 109.) In

[1] By this title the author designates the Act Book of the Lichfield Chapter which covers the years after 1384, and which has been consulted in Lichfield by Mrs. Jenkins down to the year 1394.

[2] He was buried in Lichfield cathedral and founded a chantry there. (Willis, *A Survey of the Cathedrals*, vol. II, p. 455.)

1393, he played a leading part in the refoundation of the Fraternity of St. Anne. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 248.) He died before 17 Aug., 1395. The chamberlain of Chester has recently been identified with a layman of the same name who subsequently became a chamberlain of the exchequer and chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. (*Somerville*, p. 389.) This is erroneous. The latter lived until 1431 (*ibid.*) while the chamberlain of Chester is known to have been dead by March, 1396. (C.R.R., 19 and 20 Rich. II, m. 1(5).) Moreover, the chamberlain occurs in deeds of 1385 as " Sir John Wodehous ", and " John Wodehous, clerk ". (Barker, *Talbot Deeds*, pp. 35 and 36.) The two men were probably relations.

Mr. John Layot (or Leyot), *priest*, bachelor of canon law (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 270), became dean on the 17 Aug., 1395, soon after the death of Woodhouse. In Oct., 1397, he occurs as king's clerk (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 246), but he had earlier associations with Chester. 1392–4, rector of Coddington, a living in the gift of the abbey of St. Werburgh (*Ormerod*, vol. II, pp. 609–10), and was later alleged to have assisted the abbot in the fabrication of false bulls for the appropriation of the churches of Astbury and St. Mary on the Hill. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 11.) He was ratified as parson of Denford, Northants., in Feb., 1390 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 191), and resigned before Dec., 1402. This was another living in the gift of the abbot of St. Werburgh's. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 417.) He was presented to a prebend of Southwell in Oct., 1397. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 246.) 18 Dec., 1405 (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 95), he became rector of a moiety of Malpas. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 607.) Feb., 1412 (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 326), papal indult to him—who, in the chapel of Hale, situate within the parish of Childwall in the diocese of Lichfield, for the weal of the souls of himself, his progenitors and all faithful departed, has founded and erected a chantry for two perpetual chaplains, and who desires to serve God in the said chantry along with the said chaplains, and to be buried with his parents in the said chapel, in which he was christened—whilst studying letters at a university, or dwelling in the Roman court or the said chantry, or one of his benefices, to take for life, and let to farm to any persons, the fruits, etc., of the said deanery, and any other his benefices. Dec., 1414 (*C.P.L.* vol. VI, p. 506), dispensation to him, already dispensed to hold a moiety of Malpas in addition to his deanery, to hold during ten years one other benefice with cure or otherwise incompatible. He was still rector of a moiety of Malpas in 1427. (*Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. XCIII, p. 43.) Presented to the church of Bangor by Sir Richard Lestrange of Ellesmere, 21 Aug., 1418. (Lich. Reg., vol. VIII, f. 19.) In Sept., 1422, he was still dean, and occurs as presenting to the church of Plemstall. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 809.) Richard Leyot is found as dean in Dec., 1423, so that John's death must have occurred between these two dates. Besides his deanery, he held, at the time of his death, the rectories of Malpas and Bangor. He was buried at Hale in accordance with his own wishes. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, pp. 609–10.) It is possible that he was rector of St. Peter's, 1402–ante 1430, but more probably the rector was a younger kinsman of the same name (see below). In the numerous references to the dispute over his rights, the rector of St. Peter's is nowhere stated to have been also the dean of St. John's, a fact which is unlikely to have been omitted.

Richard Leyot, D.C.L. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 327.) Found as dean of St. John's in Dec., 1423, when the pope issued a decree, in consideration of the poverty of the church, permitting the deanery to be considered for his

lifetime as a compatible benefice. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VII, p. 282.) He resigned before 27 March, 1431. He was the illegitimate son of a priest. (*C.P.L.*, vol. V, p. 536.) As clerk of diocese of Lichfield, dispensed, 25 July, 1405, to hold benefice with cure. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 69.) Feb., 1412, he obtained a dispensation, as rector of Brampton (said to be worth no more than 40 marks per annum), to hold with it for ten years one other benefice with cure (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 246), and an indult to farm his rectory whilst studying at a university. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 327.) Sept., 1415, preb. York. July, 1418, exchanged Brampton for Hampton Lucy, Warwicks. Dec., 1418, preb. Sarum. 1418, preb. Linc. For a short time in 1419, vicar of St. Michael, Coventry. 1420–5, rector of Brington, Northants. (Thompson, *Visitation of Religious Houses in Lincolnshire*, vol. I, p. 203.) By March, 1420, he had become dean of St. Asaph, and chancellor of the duke of Bedford, and then obtained another indult to farm his deanery and other benefices. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VII, p. 146.) He was still the duke's chancellor in 1423. (*Ibid.* p. 282.) 1429, ratified as parson of Broad Town, Wilts. (*Cal. Pat. 1429–36*, p. 2.) Dec., 1431, till death in Jan., 1449, prebendary Eccleshall in Lichfield cathedral. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 601 ; Lich. Reg., vol. X, f. 16.) 1431, inst. to Berwick St. John's, Wilts.; resigned 1432, upon his institution to Boston, Lincs. May, 1440, canon of Wells. April, 1446, dean Sarum. (*Thompson, loc. cit.*) The family originated in Hale, where they held considerable properties (*Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. XCIII, p. 110), but some members seem to have settled in Chester. A John Layot was sheriff in 1436. This dean may well have been the son of his predecessor.

Walter Shiryngton, *clerk*, from 27 March, 1431, until resignation before 15 March, 1438, on exchange with Rodeley for the prebend of Offley in Lichfield cathedral. 1405–10, Clerk of the Signet. (*Otway-Ruthven*, p. 157.) Dec., 1410, as clerk of the king's " secret seal " and a subdeacon, dispensed from proceeding to higher orders for seven years. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 210.) He entered the service of the duke of Gloucester under Henry V, and finally, in 1431, became chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. (*Cal. Pat., 1436–41*, p. 299, *1441–6*, p. 446, *Somerville*, p. 389.) He died 2 Feb., 1449, and, being then a canon of S. Paul's, was buried there. (*Hennessey*, p. 37.) Prof. Hamilton Thompson (*op cit.*, p. 195) gives a very lengthy, but still incompete, list of his preferments. During the period that he was dean of St. John's, he held prebends in Dublin (*Cal. Pat., 1429–36*, p. 285), Lincoln (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 142), Salisbury and Chichester (*Hennessey*, p. XXXIX), and it is evident from the numerous bequests in his will (*Somerville*, p. 389) that he died a very wealthy man. He founded the library at St. Paul's, and also had a chantry chapel built there, and another in the chapel of St. Margaret, Uxbridge. (*Somerville, loc. cit.*)

Humphrey Rodeley. 1429, exchanges prebend Wells for prebend Offley, Lichfield. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, p. 58.) 15 March, 1438, exchanged Offley for deanery of St. John's. Dead before 15 Aug., 1438. (And see rectors of St. Mary's.)

Mr. Thomas Heywode, LL.B., *priest*, collated 15 Aug., 1438. Feb., 1444, exchanged with Asser for the church of Islip, Lincoln dio. Described as of a race of barons. (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 88.) He was also rector of Northenden, 1432–48 (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 613), but had obtained a papal dispensation to hold another incompatible benefice. 1434–57, he held successively the Lichfield prebends of Gaia Minor, Dassat Parva, Ruiton and

Hansacre (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 599, 609, 611, 622), and was a canon residentiary there. (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 88.) April, 1446, as rector of Islip and Northenden, he obtained confirmation of a dispensation to hold two incompatible benefices. (*C.P.L.*, vol. IX, p. 579.) In 1452, he held the churches of Bosworth and Rolleston (*C.P.L.*, vol. X, p. 115) and, in Feb. 1456 (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 88), dispensed to acquire another benefice with cure of souls, provided that it was not a parish church. He occurs as vicar-general of the bishop of Lichfield in 1453 (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 8), 1455 (*ibid.*, f. 13) and 1459 (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 9). He was dean of Lichfield, 1457–92. According to the benefactions book displayed in the cathedral, he gave many benefactions, including an organ, windows in the chapter house, etc., and began the construction of the library.

Mr. Roger Asser, I.U.B. Feb., 1444, exchanged the church of Islip, Lincoln dio., for the deanery, which he held until his death before 13 July, 1471. He was probably a kinsman of John Asser of Chester (in 1433 he entered into a recognizance on John's behalf. C.R.R., 12 & 13 Hen. VI, m. 4(2)) who, in 1438, succeeded his father, another John, as master mason of the castles of Chester and North Wales, and was appointed, in the following year, as surveyor of the works of the city walls. (C.R.R., 3 & 4 Hen. V, m. 8d(9) ; 16 & 17 Hen. VI, m. 5d(1) ; 17 Hen. VI, m. 4d(2).) A doctor of civil and of canon law, he obtained, in Jan., 1438, a dispensation, as rector of Denbigh and prebendary of the collegiate church of Abergwily, value not exceeding 40 and 12 marks respectively, to hold another incompatible benefice. (*C.P.L.*, vol. IX, p. 7.) 19 March, 1444, presented by the abbot of St. Werburgh to the rectory of St. Peter. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 326.) 16 Sept., 1464, exchanged for rectory of St. Mary on the Hill (*ibid.*) which he held, together with the deanery of St. John's, until his death on 15 Jan., 1471. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 233.) In 1456, he was official of the archdeacon of Chester. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 41.) His name occurs frequently in the episcopal register as commissary for inductions and the like. (e.g. vol. X, f. 28 ; vol. XI, f. 36 ; vol. XII, f. 101.) Another kinsman was William Asser, who was a prebendary here during his tenure of the deanery (see below).

Mr. Thomas Milly, collated 13 July, 1471 ; resigned before 2 Jan., 1489. 1457, described as public and apostolic notary (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 84) and as " our registrar ", in letters of collation. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 105.) 1482, vicar-general. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 115.) He was a residentiary canon of Lichfield, 1488–1505 (re-Benefactions Book), and founded the almshouses there. He is also said to have given liberally to the vicar's common fund. Ormerod is, however, mistaken in saying that he was " afterwards dean of Lichfield ".

Mr. Christopher Talbot, collated 2 Jan., 1489. Dead before 13 Feb., 1493. 1481, prebendary of Dassat Parva, which he quitted in the same year for Whittington. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 599.) 1485, resigned from this prebend (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 53) and was presented by the king to the parish church of Whitchurch, Salop. (*Cal. Pat., 1476–85*, p. 497.) According to *Ormerod* (vol. I, p. 115) he was archdeacon of Chester from 7 June, 1486, until before 1490, but he still held this office on 1 March, 1491, when he was present at the election of Dame Pasmyth as prioress of St. Mary. (Reg. Morton, f. 57.) He was a younger son of John, earl of Shrewsbury (1442–53). (*Ormerod, loc. cit.*)

Mr. Hugh Oldham, *bachelor of decrees*, collated 13 Feb., 1493 ; resigned before 30 June, 1494. This was the future bishop of Exeter, well known as the founder of Manchester Grammar School. (Mumford, *Hugh Oldham.*) At this time, he was archdeacon of Exeter, a canon of St. Stephen's, Westminster (*Hennessey*, p. 339) ; rector of Swineshead, Lincolnshire, 1493–4 (*Hennessey*, p. XLI). In Feb., 1492, he had become one of the receivers general of the lands late of the earls of Warwick and Northumberland. (*Cal. Pat., 1485–94*, p. 368.) He owed his advancement to the favour of the Lady Margaret whose chaplain he was, and in these years he was much occupied in her legal business. (Mumford, *op. cit.*, p. 77 *et seq.*) In 1494, he became a J.P. for Devon and Cornwall. Clearly he cannot have been resident in Chester. (*D.N.B.*)

Mr. Thomas Mawdysley, S.T.P., collated 30 June, 1494. As dean, he presented himself to the vicarage of Plemstall. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 809.)

Dr. Robert Lawrence, said by *Ormerod* (vol. I, p. 308) to have been dean in 1500, but he does not seem to occur as such in the Lichfield Registers.

Ralph Cantrell, LL.D., *chaplain*, collated Jan., 1505, on the death of the last dean not named. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. 2, f. 57.) Dead before 13 March, 1531. (See in list of canons.)

Mr. Geoffrey Blythe, LL.D. Nephew of Geoffrey Blythe, bishop of Lichfield, 1503–31 ; educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge. 1522, prebendary of Lichfield and of the collegiate church of Gnosall. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. 2, f. 27.) 1526–41, rector of West Kirby. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. 2, f. 62 ; vol. XIV, f. 38.) Vicar of Chesterton, Cambridgeshire, 1528–34 ; Master of King's Hall, Camb., 1528–41. (Brownbill, *West Kirby*, p. 111.) In 1529, he commenced LL.D., and his grace for that degree states that he had studied at Louvain. He held the archdeaconry of Stafford for a few days in 1530, and, on 7 June, 1530, he was admitted treasurer and precentor of Lichfield. (Which dignity was valued at £56 13*s.* 4*d.* in 1535. *Valor*, vol. III, p. 132.) Blythe was one of the divines who preached at Cambridge against Hugh Latimer, and he was buried at All Saints, Cambridge. (*D.N.B.* for most of above.) His collation to the deanery of St. John's, March, 1531, was a literal example of nepotism. He held it until his death before 9 March, 1541 ; he probably resided during most of this time at Lichfield or Cambridge.

Mr. Richard Strete, collated 9 March, 1541, and dead before 8 Jan. following. On obtaining the deanery, he resigned the 6th prebend of the Cross, which he had held since before 1535 (see below). 1521–42, prebendary of Pipa Minor in Lichfield cathedral. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 618.) 1528–43, archdeacon of Derby. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 577.) In 1529, he occurs as archdeacon of Salop and proctor for the diocesan clergy in convocation. (*Letters & Papers of Hen. VIII*, vol. IV, part III, p. 2, 700.) 1531, one of the custodians of the spiritualities during the vacancy of the see of Lichfield. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIV, f. 1.) 1535, occurs as vicar of Weston super Fromley, rector of Upton Magna, archdeacon of Salop, and receiver general of Bishop Roland Lee and of the dean and chapter of Lichfield. (*Valor*, vol. III, p. 36 ; p. 186 ; p. 130 ; p. 135.) According to the *Valor* he enjoyed at this time a very considerable annual income which must have amounted to at least £114 9*s.* 8*d.*

Mr. Richard Walker, M.A., the last dean; collated 8 Jan., 1542. "Born in Lichfield *c.* 1501, the son of an artisan; got the rudiments of education from the school of St. John the Baptist there. Sent to Jesus College Cambridge, through the influence of Bishop Roland Lee. Became master of Lichfield Grammar School, and then steward of Bishop Lee's household. . . . As long as Bishop Lee lived he doubtless spent most of his time in control of his household; but after that prelate's death in 1543, he may from time to time have personally discharged some of the duties of his various benefices." (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. II, p. 55.) According to *Ormerod* (vol. I, p. 266 n.) he was sometime in possession of the rectories of Gotham and Leek, and of a "living in Wirral". He had been prebendary of the 8th prebend since June, 1538, and continued to hold it until April, 1543, that is for more than twelve months after he had obtained the deanery. In 1535, he occurs as vicar and master of the college of Wye in Kent. (*Valor*, vol. I, p. 38.) From 1541 till death, rector of West Kirby. (Brownbill, *op. cit.*, p. 111.) 1541–2, prebendary of Bishopshill. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIV, f. 22; f. 45.) 1542–67, of Pipa Minor (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 618), both in the cathedral church of Lichfield. 1542–9, vicar of Wybunbury, which was in the patronage of the bishop. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 485.) In 1548, he was 46 years old and possessed an income of £100 besides his deanery. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314.) 1547–67, archdeacon Stafford. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 572.) His behaviour over the dissolution of the collegiate church must have been suitably submissive, because he became dean of the new cathedral in 1558. His will, dated 4 Sept., was proved 11 Nov., 1567. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 226 n.) In 1556, he was in receipt of a pension of £13 5*s.* per annum for the deanery of St. John's. (*Ibid.*)

II. Canons of St. John's [1]

William Pikerel, ante 1297.

John Picard, collated, 18 Oct., 1297, to the prebend which was formerly William Pikerel's. (Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 21.)

William de Weseham, ante 1298.

William de Stalariis, *priest*, collated 5 June, 1298, to the prebend which was of William de Weseham. (Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 21.) He is probably to be identified with William de Style who occurs as Hengham's predecessor in Ormerod's list.

Mr. William le Constable, collated 18 Oct., 1299, to the prebend which had been John Picard's. (*Ibid.*)

Ralph de Hengham. The famous chief justice. Archdeacon of Worcester, 1287–8 (*Le Neve*, vol. III, p. 74), prebendary of Hereford, 1274–1311 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 512), chancellor of Exeter, 1275–9 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 417). He may also have been a canon of St. Paul's. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 369.) He was collated to a prebend of St. John's, 21 Oct., 1303, and held it until his death in 1311. (See also *D.N.B.*)

[1] This list is based on that printed in *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 308 *et seq.*, which incorporates all the biographical material in the text for which no references are cited.

William de Eston, *clerk* ; resigned from prebend here 1307 ; parson of Stanwell, Middlesex, ante 1329. (*Cal. Pat., 1327–30,* p. 363.)

Mr. John de Marcell, *clerk.* Collated, 6 Dec., 1308 (Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 56), to the prebend vacated by Eston. Archdeacon of Chester, between 1314 and 1321. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, p. 566.)

Mr. Roger de Haselarton, *clerk,* collated Aug., 1311, to the prebend formerly held by Hengham. 1318, papal provision of him, at the request of the archbishop of York, to the rectory of Foston, York dio., made on condition that he resigned the living of Whixley, id. dio., which he then held. (*C.P.L.,* vol. II, p. 180.)

John de Hothum, *clerk.* The younger son of a good Yorkshire family ; the well-known adherent of Edward II ; chancellor of the Irish exchequer, 1309 ; escheator beyond Trent, 1310 ; chancellor of the English exchequer, 1312 ; accompanied Edward to France, 1313, and was one of the English commissioners appointed to treat with Philip IV. Bishop of Ely, 1316 ; chancellor, 1318–20, and again, 1327–8. He died in Jan., 1337. He was collated to his prebend at St. John's, 13 Sept., 1311, and resigned from it, Aug., 1316. He held it together with a dozen other benefices in England and Ireland (*C.P.L.,* vol. II, p. 110), from which he derived, in 1312, an income of more than £240 per annum. (*D.N.B.*)

Mr. William de Henou'e. 1311–1313.

Robert de Clipston, *clerk,* collated, 29 Oct., 1313, to Henou'e's prebend. 29 April, 1314, presented to the rectory of St. Mary, which he held, probably, until 1324. 15 May, 1317, inducted " in prebendam quam Mag. Wm. Constable tenuit " in St. John's, presumably having resigned the other. 20 June, 1356, he exchanged this for a prebend in the collegiate church of Stafford. 1305–56, he held successively the prebends of Flixton, Stotfold, Hansacre and Bishopshill in the cathedral of Lichfield. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, pp. 589, 602, 611 and 626.) [1]

Richard de Lustshull or Lustrishull, *clerk.* Collated, 7 Aug., 1316, to Hothum's prebend. A royal clerk ; 1315–21, supervisor and keeper of lands reserved to the chamber. (*Tout,* vol. II, p. 330.) 10 Sept., 1320, papal reservation to him, at the king's request, of a benefice, valued at 50 marks per annum, in the gift of the abbess and convent of Romsey, notwithstanding that he already held canonries in Salisbury and Chester, and was rector of Elmdon, Warwickshire. (*C.P.L.,* vol. II, p. 194.) At the time of his death, which took place before May, 1349 (*Papal Petitions,* p. 152), he held a prebend in the conventual church of Romsey, presumably the reserved benefice just noticed (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50,* p. 328), the mastership of St. Cross, Winchester (*Papal Petitions* p. 165), the church of Elmdon (*ibid.,* p. 152), and, perhaps, this prebend.

Robert de Hernington, occurs as canon and prebendary, 1317. (*Cheshire Sheaf,* Third Series, vol. XXXIII, p. 114.) He had left before 18 July, 1318. There is some circumstantial evidence that he was resident in Chester, a house in the close being subsequently designated as that formerly occupied by him. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379.)

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[1] Also, canon of Wells, 1329–49. (*Reg. Shrewsbury,* pp. 8, 581.)

Richard de Cestria. 8 June, 1317, provided by the pope to a canonry in St. John's with expectation of a prebend, notwithstanding his possession of a canonry and prebend of York and the rectory of Chipping Campden. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 159.) He soon obtained the expected prebend, occurring in July, 1318, as prebendary of the prebend formerly occupied by Hernington. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 379.) He is described as a professor of canon law; was a clerk in the household of the archbishop of York, Sept., 1312; the archbishop's chancellor, March, 1313. (*Reg. Greenfield*, vol. I, para. 168, 585.) Nov., 1317, provided to a canonry of Ripon. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 166.) Feb., 1316, he went overseas in the king's service, with William Melton, archbishop elect of York, presumably to Avignon, where he obtained the provisions noticed above. (*Cal. Pat., 1313–17*, p. 386.) Thus he passed from the service of the archbishop to that of the king, and in May, 1322, royal service took him to Gascony. (*Cal. Pat., 1321–4*, p. 109.) Jan., 1341, appointed a remembrancer of the exchequer. (*Cal. Pat., 1340–3*, p. 81.) He was still rector of Campden, 1322 (*Cal. Pat., 1321–4*, p. 109), and canon of Ripon, 1341. (*Cal. Pat., 1340–3*, p. 331.) He held the prebend of Gevendale, York, from 1314 until his death in 1346. (*Le Neve*, vol. III, p. 189.)

William de Newerk, resigned his prebend, Sept., 1328. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 282.) At this time he held also the rectory of Brington, Huntingdonshire, and a prebend of Southwell. (*Ibid.*) Formerly chaplain to Henry Newark, archbishop of York, 1298–9, whose kinsman he doubtless was. (*D.N.B.*, Henry Newark.)

William de Bernak. Provided by the pope, 10 Nov., 1328 (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 284), to the prebend vacated by Newerk. If he is that William de Bernak who was parson of Blatherwick, Northants, 1351, he was, almost certainly, a kinsman of Sir William de Bernak, Kt. (*Cal. Pat., 1350–4*, p. 171.) The Bernak family seems to have been seated at Burgh, Lincolnshire. (Burke, *History of the Commoners*, vol. I, p. 661.) He had vacated his prebend before Sept., 1366. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 216.)

John Gilberti de Arewedon, provided, 21 June, 1331 (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 332), to a canonry and prebend.

John de Hasheby or Assheby. June, 1333, provided, at the king's request, to a canonry and prebend of St. John's, notwithstanding that he was already rector of Plemstall, a living in the gift of the dean of St. John's. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 376.) Archdeacon of Derby, 1338. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 576.)

Mr. Roger de Northburg, *clerk, master in the art of dialectic.* Collation, 9 March, 1338; exchanged for the prebend of Gaia Minor, Lichfield, 1354. He was a nephew of Bishop Roger de Northburg (bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, 1321–58). He held the prebends of Curborough, 1337–42 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 593), Dernford, 1349–52 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 596), and Gaia Minor, 1354–ante 1369 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 608), all in Lichfield cathedral.[1] 14 Feb., 1348, he was presented by the king to the church of North Luffenham, Lincoln dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 18.) Dec., 1349, he was provided at the request of Bishop Roger, to a canonry with the expectation of a prebend in St. Paul's. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 191.) In Oct., 1366, he was in possession

[1] And of Sandiacre, 1343–8. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 624.)

of a prebend in the church of St. Chad, Shrewsbury, in addition to that of Gaia Minor and the church of Luffenham. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 217.) His family was powerful in the administration, and several other members of it were prominent in church and state. (Cf. articles in *D.N.B.* on Bishop Roger and Michael de Northburg.) He was resident in Lichfield from at least 1357 until his death in 1367. (Ashmole. 794.)

Nicholas Hethe. Resigned his prebend, 25 May, 1338, and collated to the wardenship of the hospital of Denwall. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 112.)

John de Sulgrave, B.C.L. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 344.) Collated, 25 May, 1338, vice Hethe. (*Ibid.*) 1336, preb. Longden. (*Ibid.*, p. 139.) Gaia Minor, 1338. (*Ibid.*, p. 163.) Archdeacon of Stafford, 1358. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 571.) Jan., 1359, papal confirmation of his collation to that archdeaconry and to a canonry and prebend of Bishopshill, notwithstanding that he already held a prebend of Gnossall. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 344.) The latter prebend he exchanged, in Feb., 1364, for one at St. Mary's, Leicester (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 116), the former he still retained in 1366. (*Ibid.*, p. 217.) In Feb., 1375, the archdeaconry of Stafford was vacant by his death. (*Ibid.*, p. 140.) He had been resident at Lichfield from at least 1356 until his death. (Ashmole. 794.) His family were probably neighbours of the Northburgs in their home county of Northamptonshire and several members of it occur in association with the Northburg connection. (Thompson, "Pluralism in the Medieval Church", *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, vol. XXXVI, p. 3.)

Mr. Hugh de Marisco (i.e. Marsh). Collated, 21 Dec., 1339. Described as B.C.L., "clerk and kinsman" of Bishop Northburg (*Papal Petitions*, p. 138), and doubtless he was also related to John de Marisco, at this time dean of St. John's. Feb., 1342, obtained a prebend of Gnosall, Staffordshire (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 169); sometime preb., St. Chad's, Shrewsbury. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 217.) Oct., 1348 (*Papal Petitions*, p. 138), the bishop successfully petitioned the pope on his behalf, for provision to the church of Burton, Co. Dorset, the Gnosall preb. notwithstanding. Presumably he had resigned his preb. at St. John's before this date. Archdeacon of Coventry, 1349 and 1352 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 568, 569), and of Derby, 1354. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 263.)

Mr. John de Cravene. Held preb. here as early as 1344 (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 308) and until at least April, 1355 (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 549), probably until his death at about the end of 1357. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 437.) He was a royal clerk, and was presented by the king to preb. Dernford, Lichfield, May, 1350. (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 500.) 1345–57, rector of Rostherne. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 437.) Prior to May, 1347, he was farmer of the archdeaconry of Chester, then in the hands of an alien (*Cal. Pat., 1345–8*, p. 297), and again in 1348 and 1354 when that office was in commission. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 114 n.) He occurs as the archdeacon's official, July 1357. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 270.) His last years were burdened with great debts to the prince of Wales (*ibid.*, p. 152), probably originating in a fine of £300, imposed upon him in 1353 for an unspecified offence. (*Ibid.*, p. 137.) 1349, the dean and chapter licensed to acquire from him four messuages in Foregate Street, and 10s. of annual rent issuing out of certain lands and

tenements in Chester. (*Cooper Scott*, p. 16.) He was evidently one of the few residentiary canons, as we find him claiming unpaid commons which were due to him for a number of years. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 228.)

Mr. Richard de Byrcheles. Ante May, 1346.

Robert de Shirburne. 6 May, 1346, collated to preb. which was Byrcheles'. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 120. Helsby accidentally gives this as the date of Byrcheles' collation.) Retained it until *c.* Sept. 1360. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 394.)

Nicholas de Swynnton (or Swynnerton) occurs as holding preb. here, which he exchanged for another held by Walter de Chilterne, 21 July, 1350. He was a kinsman of Sir Robert de Swynnerton of Swinnerton, Staffordshire, by whom he was presented to the rectory of Barrow, which he held 1349–57. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 341.) March, 1349, described as king's clerk, he was the holder of a preb. in the free chapel of Penkridge (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 270), and, in Aug. of the same year, he was presented to the deanery of the royal free chapel of St. Mary's, Stafford (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 363), which was still in his possession in April, 1356. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 132.) Canon of Lichfield (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 606) and rector of Muccleston, Staffordshire, ante 1313–57. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXXI, p. 94.) He died in the latter year. (*Ibid.*)

Mr. Walter de Chilterne was a preb. 1350, and exchanged with Swynnerton, as noticed above. Some time after Sept., 1347 (when Richard de Oclegh occurs as rector; *Earwaker*, p. 78), he was presented, by the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh's presumably, to the church of St. Mary's on the Hill. Feb., 1361, the king ratified his estate as parson of St. Mary's, and as preb. of St. John's, Gnosall and Lichfield. (*Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, p. 536.) He occurs in 1346 as public and apostolic notary, and, in June, 1361, as chancellor of the bishop of Lichfield. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 157.) Died 24 Sept., 1361, being then rector of St. Mary's and canon of St. John's. (*Ibid.*, p. 159.)

John de Wetfield. 19 Aug., 1350, provided to a canonry of St. John's with expectation of a prebend. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 417.) A scholar of canon and civil law. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 138.) He seems to have begun his career as a clerk in the service of Bishop Ginwell of Lincoln (1347–62). In 1348 the bishop petitioned the pope that the dispensation already granted to hold a benefice in spite of illegitimacy be extended so that he might hold one benefice with cure of souls, and two without cure. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 138.) In that year, he was serving as clerk to the king's ambassador to the Holy See, John de Carleton, at whose petition he was provided to the church of Hunsdon, Hertfordshire. (*Ibid.*, p. 137.) He was also provided, before 1355, to the rectory of Bebington, Wirral. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 186.) The implication would seem to be that he was still employed at Rome at the time of his provision to St. John's. In 1361 (*ibid.*, p. 159) and 1362 (*ibid.*, p. 161) we find him acting as bishop's commissary in the neighbourhood of Chester, which suggests that, in these years, he was locally resident. He continued rector of Bebington until his death, 19 April, 1381. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 186.)

John de Depyng, *clerk.* He was collated to a prebend on 8 June, 1354, and resigned 1 May, 1359. He was a bachelor of civil law. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 119.) In June, 1318, when he was 22 years old, he obtained a papal dispensation to hold a benefice, although only in minor orders. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 176.) In Feb., 1322, he was provided to a canonry of Chichester with expectation of a prebend, notwithstanding that he already held prebends of St. David's and of St. Andrew's, Auckland, and was rector of Peakirk, Northamptonshire. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 225.) In Oct., 1327, he was of the company of Bishop Roger of Lichfield, when the latter went overseas on the king's service, and is then described as parson of the church of Grittleton, Wiltshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1327–30*, p. 177.) March, 1328, Depyng occurs as chancellor of Lichfield and prebendary of Allerwas. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 144.) Sept., 1331, he exchanged a prebend in St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, for preb. Dernford. (*Ibid.*, f. 148.) From 1331–63, he was successively prebendary of Dernford, Gaia Minor and Curborough, in the cathedral church of Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 595, 608, 593.) He then exchanged the prebend of Curborough for that of Syerscote, in the collegiate church of Tamworth (*Cal. Pat., 1361–4*, p. 431), from which he resigned in Oct., 1366. (*Cal. Pat., 1364–7*, p. 320.) He also held a prebend in the collegiate church of Bromyard (*Cal. Pat., 1370–4*, p. 61), and it may have been he who was presented by the king to a mediety of the churches of Middleton and Collingtree, Northamptonshire, in Nov., 1364. (*Cal. Pat., 1364–7*, p. 39.) He held the church of Austrey, from at least 1366 (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 221) until his death in Sept., 1369. (*Ibid.*, p. 42.) He was, at least intermittently, resident at Lichfield from 1332 to 1363. (Ashmole. 794.)

John de Langholm. In Jan., 1355, Blanche, lady of Lidell, and daughter of Henry, earl of Lancaster, petitioned the pope, on behalf of her clerk, John de Langholm, that he might be presented to a canonry and prebend of Salisbury, notwithstanding his possession of the church of Brettenham, Norfolk, which was worth 16 marks a year. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 277.) The pope was unable to grant her request, but he consoled her clerk by a provision to a prebend of St. John's.

Richard de Boule. 20 June, 1356, exchanged a prebend of St. Mary's collegiate church, Stafford, with Robert de Clipston (see above) for one at St. John's. 3 Feb., 1361, exchanged again, with Newenham, this time for a prebend in the royal free chapel of Wolverhampton. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 157.) In Feb., 1363, this prebend was exchanged for one in Lincoln cathedral (*Cal. Pat., 1361–4*, p. 311), and a further exchange, this time with Thomas Hervey, brought him back to St. John's, some time before Jan., 1365, to one of the prebends of " Holy Cross " there. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 119.)[1] On this latter date, he finally quitted St. John's by yet another exchange with Newenham for a canonry and prebend in Wells cathedral.

He was a bachelor in civil law (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 220) and occurs, as a king's clerk, in April, 1353 (*Cal. Pat., 1350–4*, p. 423), when he was presented by the king to the wardenship of Dunwich hospital. In June, 1359, he was at Avignon in the household of Sir Richard de Stafford, then on an embassy to the Holy See (*Papal Petitions*, p. 340), and is then described as canon and prebendary of Lichfield, and of St. John's, Chester, and rector of Kingsbury, Warwickshire. (*Ibid.*, p. 344.) He took this opportunity to

[1] Here *Le Neve* is probably in error. Willis makes Boule exchange in June, 1364, with Wm. de Navesby. (*A Survey of the Cathedrals*, vol. III, p. 155.)

petition the pope for a benefice valued £40 in the gift of the bishop of Lichfield. (*Ibid.*, p. 340.) In Oct., 1366, it was recorded in the bishops' register that " Richard de Boule, of Lichfield, clerk . . . has the prebend of Hondesacre in the church of Lichfield, where he has dwelt for many years past, taxed at 20 marks, the church of Tattenhall, taxed at 25 marks, and the prebend of Bukeland in the church of Wells taxed at 15 marks ". (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 220.) He was also sometime archdeacon of Coventry. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 569.) Resident in Lichfield from at least 1356 until his death about 1389. (Ashmole. 794 ; Lichfield Act Book.)

William de Esinden. 9 Sept., 1358, provided to a canonry here with expectation of a prebend, notwithstanding his expectations of a benefice in the gift of the bishop of Carlisle. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 593.) Granted on the petition of Arnold de Lebreto, knight. (Perhaps d'Albret, a member of the prominent Gascon family of that name.) (*Papal Petitions*, p. 333.) In 1360, the pope confirmed his collation to the church of Crosthwaite, in the diocese of Carlisle, notwithstanding his canonry at Chester. (*Ibid.*, p. 357.)

Robert de Elkynton. 1359 (no month), provided to a canonry with expectation of a prebend. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 603.)

William de Meer, *clerk.* 1 May, 1359, instituted to the prebend from which Depyng had resigned, at the presentation of the prince of Wales, the temporalities of the see (i.e. those within the palatinate of Chester) being in his hands. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 8.) In June, 1361, he exchanged it for the church of Waverton. 1344, perpetual vicar at St. John's. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 105.) 1345–8, vicar of Sandbach. (*Ibid.*) 1348, exchanged for church of Weverham. (*Ibid.*) 1351–6, rector Baddiley, Cheshire. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 458.) 1356–9, rector of Northenden (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 612), which he exchanged, in Aug., 1359, for the church of Cubley, Staffordshire, holding this last living for only a few days. (*Ibid.* ; *Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 8.)

Alan de Stokes. 8 Sept., 1360, presentation by the prince of Wales of Sir Alan de Stokes, the prince's clerk . . . for admission to the prebend held in his life by Mr. Robert de Shirburn. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 394.) He resigned on 27 Nov., 1393. In May, 1363, the prince presented him with five oaks from Delamere forest, for the reparation of the houses of his said prebend. He is described by Margaret Sharpe as " an experienced financial servant ". He was with the prince in Gascony in 1355 and 1356. (*Tout*, vol. V, p. 328.) 1364, keeper of the prince's wardrobe. (*Tout*, vol. V, p. 435.) In 1369, he was treasurer of Aquitaine and constable of Bordeaux. (*Tout*, vol. VI, p. 70.) In 1372 and 1376, he was acting as the prince's receiver general. (*Tout*, vol. V, p. 439.) 1377–90, keeper of the king's great wardrobe. (*Tout*, vol. VI, p. 37.) In 1376, he had been one of the Black Prince's executors. (*Cal. Pat., 1374–7*, p. 378.) His manifold services were duly rewarded by ecclesiastical preferment. In 1349, the prince petitioned the pope, on his behalf, for a benefice, worth £40, in the gift of the bishop of Ely. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 154.) May, 1361, exchanged church of Great Billing, Lincoln dio., for that of Snargate, Canterbury dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1361–4*, p. 13.) In Sept., 1366, the prince of Wales petitioned the pope on behalf of Alan de Stokes, dean of the chapel of St. Buryan, Exeter dio., for a canonry of Lincoln with expectation of a prebend, notwithstanding that he had also a canonry and prebend of St. John's, Chester. The pope granted this petition only on

condition that Stokes surrendered his prebend at St. John's, but it looks as though he must have been ultimately persuaded to give way on this point. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 454.) Stokes was dean of St. Asaph from 1376 to 1381. (Thomas, *History of St. Asaph*, p. 241.) 1379, by concession of Pope Urban VI, the king nominated him to a prebend of Lincoln. (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 328.) April, 1381, again presented to the deanery of St. Buryan, Cornwall. (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 615.) In Feb., 1382, he was presented again by the king, to the church of Navenby, Lincolnshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 91.) Oct., 1383, exchanged latter for that of Great Billing. (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 319.) Oct., 1386, resigned Billing. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 218.) 1393, exchanged prebend of Lincoln for one of Lanchester, Durham. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 155.) The chapel of St. Buryan was void by his death in Jan., 1394. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 349.)

Hugh de Segrave. 18 Sept., 1360, grant to the king's clerk, Hugh de Segrave, of the prebend which Mr. Robert de Shirburn lately had in the collegiate church of St. John, Chester, in the king's gift by reason of the voidance of the see of Coventry and Lichfield. (*Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, p. 462.) But, as we have seen above, Alan de Stokes was presented to this same prebend ten days earlier by the prince of Wales. As we know that Stokes continued to enjoy a prebend at Chester, and as it was customary for the prince to exercise the royal rights of presentation within the palatinate, it would seem that Segrave was excluded. He is, nevertheless, typical of the canons presented from time to time by the king. 1361, presented to the church of Cottenham, Ely dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1361–4*, p. 47.) 1359, grant to the king's clerk, H. de S., for long service to the king and Queen Philippa, of an annuity of £20 . . . while he remains in the queen's service. (*Cal. Pat, 1358–61*, p. 293.) 1361, increased to £40. (*Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, p. 514.) He was controller of the wardrobe from 1360–8. (*Tout*, vol. VI, p. 29; vol. IV, p. 156.)

John de Swinley, *priest.* (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 447.) 20 Jan., 1361, provided at the king's request to a canonry with expectation of a prebend. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 363.) He was in possession of the prebend in Oct., 1366. (Register of Archbishop Langham, quoted Thompson, "Pluralism in the Medieval Church", *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, vol. XXXVI, pt. 1, p. 5.) June, 1349, presented by the king to the church of Langton, Lincoln dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 303.) June, 1351, papal notary. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 447.) In this year, he occurs as a member of the household of Archbishop Islip of Canterbury, and also as clerk of Nicholas de Otterbourn, Kt., master of the king's children, and the pope granted petitions advanced on his behalf, by the archdeacon of Huntingdon, and by Otterbourn, for his provision to a benefice in the gift of the bishop, prior and chapter of Worcester, and to a benefice with cure, valued £50, in the gift of the abbot and convent of Ramsey. (*Papal Petitions*, pp. 212 and 213.) 1357 until about Jan., 1362, rector of Warrington. (*V.C.H. Lancs.*, vol. III, p. 310.) June, 1360, king presented him to Winwick. (*Cal. Pat., 1338–61*, p. 371.) Although this living said to be Lichfield dio., Hamilton Thompson thinks Winwick in Huntingdon may be intended, not Winwick, Lancs. July, 1361, he was presented to Somersham, Hunts., which he does not appear to have obtained. (*Cal. Pat., 1361–4*, p. 47.) In August, same year, presented to a prebend in St. Stephen's, Westminster (*ibid.*, p. 53), and, in the same month, to the wardenship for life of the free chapel of St. Anne, Aveley, Essex. (*Ibid.*) In Oct., presented to a moiety of the church of Walpole,

Norfolk (*ibid.*, pp. 82 and 92); in the same month, to a prebend in St. Paul's (*ibid.*, p. 90); in Nov., to a prebend of Abergwily (*ibid.*, p. 128); in Dec., to one in Westbury-on-Trim (*ibid.*, p. 132). It seems clear that his presentation to Walpole was in compensation for his supersession in Somersham. Feb., 1362, he obtained a grant of the deanery of Westbury (*ibid.*, p. 162), but he did not long continue to hold his prebend there. Jan., 1362, granted a prebend in St. David's (*ibid.*, p. 138), and, in Aug., the archdeaconry of Huntingdon. (*Ibid.*, p. 240.) 1366, he exchanged his prebend in St. Paul's for one in St. Mary's, Leicester, but re-exchanged in Nov., 1368. (*Hennessey*, pp. 30 and XXXVII.) He had resigned his prebend in St. Stephen's by 20 Feb., 1367. (*Cal. Pat., 1364–7*, p. 384; for all the above see Thompson, *loc. cit.*) [1]

John de Newenham, *clerk*. 1349, presented by prince of Wales to rectory of Cheadle. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 630.) Feb., 1353 (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 95), exchanged for Eckington, Derbyshire, which he still held in Aug., 1360. (*Cal. Clos., 1360–4*, p. 128.) July, 1353 (*Black Prince's Reg.*, vol. III, p. 111), presented by the prince to the wardenship of St. Nicholas chantry, Nantwich, which he held until 1364. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 449.) July, 1349, presented, by the prince of Wales, to the vicarage of Over, the temporalities of the nunnery of Chester then being in his hands, but had resigned before next March. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 184.) Dec., 1349, presented by king to church of Farndish, Bedfordshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1348–50*, p. 440.) In the same year, the pope granted the prince's petition, on his behalf, for a living, valued £40, in the gift of St. Mary de Pratis, Leicester. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 154.) 1352, exchanged rectory of St. Mary le Bow, London, for that of Stowe Novem, Northamptonshire. (*Hennessey*, pp. 307, CXXXI.) April, 1359 (*Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, p. 191), grant of prebend of Lichfield, in king's gift, which he held until some time before 1374. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 589.) 8 March, 1361, exchanged a prebend in the royal free chapel of Wolverhampton for one at St. John's. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 157.) Nov., 1360, king presented him to Thundersley, Essex.[2] Nov., 1363, resigned prebend of Chester in favour of one at Lincoln, which he was still in possession of in 1367. (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 47.) 29 Jan., 1365, exchanged a prebend of Wells for one at St. John's. In the following Nov., he again exchanged, this time for the prebend of Stotfold, in Lichfield cathedral. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 119), which he held until 1368. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 626.) Jan., 1365, presented by the king to the church of Fenny Stanton. (*Cal. Pat., 1364–7*, p. 83.) In Feb. of the same year he was appointed a chamberlain of the receipt of the exchequer. (*Ibid.*, p. 93.) In 1366, on a commission of oyer and terminer in Suffolk. (*Ibid.*, p. 279.) 1367, occurs as a member of a commission appointed to enquire into the state of the fabric of the castle of Cambridge, (*ibid.*, p. 437) and, in 1368, as one of the visitors of the royal free chapels of Bridgenorth, Stafford, Tettenhall, and St. Mary, Shrewsbury. (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 142.) Nov., 1367, the king granted him the provostship of Wells (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 40), and, in May, 1368 (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 112), the deanery of the free chapel of Wolverhampton. May, 1379, presented to the church of Wolves Newton, in the diocese of Llandaff. (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 353.) In 1389 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 19), he exchanged the rectory of Poynings, Sussex, for that of Little Burstead, Essex. His will, dated 16 Sept., 1390, was proved nine days later. (*Hennessey*, p. CXXXI.)

[1] Swinley died in 1386. (Willis, *A Survey of the Cathedrals*, vol. III, p. 100.)

[2] *Cal. Pat., 1358–61*, p. 488.

Mr. Jordon de Holme, *clerk.* 4 June, 1361, exchanged the church of Waverton with William de Meer for the latter's prebend at St. John's. 28 July, 1364, he again exchanged with John de Morton for a prebend in the collegiate church of St. Lawrence, Gnosall. He had obtained the rectory of Waverton, in June, 1353, by exchange of the free chapel of St. Margaret, Chelmsford; resigned June, 1361. (*Ormerod*, vol. II; p. 789.) 1363–4, rector of Stockport. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 799.) 1364–76, or later, rector of Sefton. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 799, and *Cal. Clos., 1376*, p. 328.)

Robert de Walsham, *clerk.* Collated 25 Sept., 1361, in the place of Walter Chilterne defunct. He was Prince Edward's confessor. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 381.) It would seem that he was not long in the possession of this prebend because it is not mentioned with his other livings in the petitions which the prince presented to the pope on his behalf in Dec., 1361 (*ibid.*), and Jan., 1363. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 396.) In 1361, he was rector of Haseley, in Oxfordshire, dean of the chapel of Wallingford castle, and a canon of St. Paul's. In Jan., 1363, the pope confirmed his estate as canon of York, and he had also acquired in the meanwhile a prebend at Salisbury. In April, 1366, he was archdeacon of Llandaff, and precentor of Salisbury, 1375 and 1377. (*C.P.L.* vol. IV, p. 22; 204. *Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 642.) In 1374, he occurs as king's clerk (*Cal. Pat., 1370–4*, p. 465), and he held numerous other preferments in the course of his career.

Mr. John de Assheton, *clerk.* Presented 31 July, 1363, by the prince of Wales, the temporalities being in his hands. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 455.) In 1347 and 1348, he performed the office of the archdeacon of Chester, that office being in sequestration to the bishop. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 114 n.) 1363, occurs as one of the prince's clerks. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 453.) 1351–3, rector Davenham. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 240.)

Andrew Gerard. Sept., 1363, the pope granted the petition of the Black Prince that Andrew Gerard, rector of Great Henny, London dio., should be provided to a canonry at St. John's, with expectation of a prebend. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 455.) It was the prince who had presented Sir Andrew Gerard, priest, to the church of Henny in Dec., 1361 (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. IV, p. 407), and who, in the following April, granted him four oaks from his park of Lamarsh towards the repair of his chancel. (*Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 432.) His name suggests that he may have been of Italian origin.

William de Navesby, B.A. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 163), seems to have owed his career as a pluralist to the fact that he was a nephew of John de Ginwell (bishop of Lincoln, 1347–62). It was at the bishop's petition that he was provided to a prebend at Chichester in July, 1348 (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 276), and, in Oct. of the same year, to the archdeaconry of Chester. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 277.) He held the archdeaconry, except for a short interval *c.* 1354 (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 114), until 1385. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 566.) It was, doubtless, by the bishop's influence that he was able to retain the rectory of Owston, Lincolnshire, to which he had been unlawfully presented in 1348, while it was reserved to the pope. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 195; *C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 347.) This church had actually been appropriated, with papal licence, to Newburgh Priory. The monks induced Navesby to resign, in 1352, by making "a money bargain" with him. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 227, quoted, Wood-Legh, *Church Life in England*, p. 132.) In May, 1349 (*C.P.L.*,

vol. III, p. 320), he was provided to a canonry in York, with expectation of a prebend. He held the prebend of Walton Brinkhall 1349–58; (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 228), by exchange prebend Walton Ryval, 1358–61; (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 233). 1362, prebend Leighton minor.[1] (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 176.) In 1352, he occurs as king's clerk. (*Cal. Pat., 1350–4*, p. 194.) Nov., 1362, obtained the prebend of Cadington Minor in St. Paul's, by exchange with a prebend of the church of Westbury. (*Hennessey*, p. 19, p XXVII.) By exchange with Newenham, 26 Nov., 1363, a prebend here, which he gave up in the following June. (See page 135, note 1.) 1376 (*Cal. Pat., 1374–7*, p. 334) and 1383 (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 304), occurs as canon of Limerick. He died in 1386, and was buried at Drayton, Shropshire. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 114.) He was resident in Lichfield from 1381 to *c.* 1384. (Ashmole. 794.)

John de Morton, *clerk.* 28 July, 1364, exchanged with Jordan de Holme as above. In 1366, he held in addition to this prebend, which is said to have been worth £20 and not taxed, the church of Kingscliff, Lincoln dio., taxed at £20. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 217.) In Feb., 1370, he was collated by the bishop of Lichfield to the church of Checkley, Staffs. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 132), which he held until his death. (*Wm. Salt. Soc.*, vol. XV, p. 94.) He was a canon of Lichfield from 1376 till his death in 1398. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 596; 613.)

John de Cubbelegh, *chaplain.* (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 165.) 8 Oct., 1364, exchanged a prebend of St. John's for the church of West Kirby. It was subsequently established, by process of law, that he had not been rightfully possessed of the prebend, and he was forced to resign the church in 1367. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 487.)

Simon Gentil, *sub deacon.* (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 168.) Exchanged the church of West Kirby with Cubbelegh as above. In 1366, it was recorded in the bishop's register (*ibid.*, p. 220) that "Simon Gentil clerk, has the prebend in the college of St. John's which Mr. John de Craven held, worth £20, and a prebend in the royal free chapel of Stafford, taxed at 12 marks". He received the Chester prebend in exchange for the church of West Kirby with dom. John de Cubbeley, chaplain, in ignorance of a suit then pending in the Roman curia between the said John de Cubberley and dom. Adam de Warton, chaplain. In 1367, Warton won his case, and Gentil was restored to possession of West Kirby. (*Ibid.*, p. 168.) July, 1368, he exchanged this living with Ralph Gentil, presumably a kinsman, for the prebend of Syerscote, in the collegiate church of Tamworth. (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 86.) From 1335–56, he had been rector of Coddington, and had exchanged it for a chantry in Lichfield cathedral. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 735.) There was a Gentyl family in the Lancaster district, and a Simon Gentyl, citizen and draper of London, occurs about this time. (*V.C.H. Lancs.*, vol. VIII, p. 71, note 27; *Cal. Clos., 1360–4*, p. 385, both quoted in Brownbill, *West Kirby*, pp. 106–7.)

Thomas Hervey. Held a prebend of Holy Cross before Jan., 1365, and exchanged it with Richard de Boule for the prebend of Buckden, Lincs. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 119.) But see page 135, note 1.

John de Sancto Claro. 21 Nov., 1365, exchanged prebend of Stotfold, Lichfield, for the prebend in the possession of John de Newenham. He was an Italian, the nephew of Hugh Pelegrini, papal nuncio and treasurer of Lich-

[1] All in Lincoln cathedral.

field (*Papal Petitions*, p. 326), at whose request the pope had provided him to Stotfold in March, 1358. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 592.)

John de Longedon, occurs as a canon here in a list of holders of benefices entered into the Lichfield episcopal register in 1366. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 216.) " John de Longedon, B.C.L., for the last sixteen years canon of the church of Lichfield, in which he resides,[1] possesses the church of Walsham, Linc. dio., taxed at 24 marks, the prebend of Dernford in Lichfield cathedral, not taxed but of the clear yearly value of 3*s.* 4*d.*, and the prebend which was Dom William de Bernak's in the collegiate church of St. John, Chester, not taxed but of the value in common years of 30 marks. This prebend has been from the time that he got it, the subject of a lawsuit with Mr. John Joskyn, M.A., and he protests that if he had peaceful possession of it, he would choose it and his prebend of Lichfield, and let go his aforesaid church." He was admitted to Dernford, Dec., 1362 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 596), and exchanged it, Feb., 1370, together with the church of Thoresby, Lincoln, for the church of Northill, Bedfordshire (?). (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 133.)

Mr. David Grafton. In 1366, he was rector of Aldford, taxed at 13 marks, and prebendary of St. John's, not taxed but valued at £20. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 221.) He seems to have been in Chester in March, 1384, when he was one of several local clergy who received a mandate then from the bishop of Hereford, as commissioner of the apostolic see, to take action with regard to a dispute which had arisen between certain citizens and the Dominican convent. (*Reg. John Gilbert*, p. 56.) Rector of Swettenham, about 1360. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 76.) 1381–94, rector Coddington. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 735.) Perhaps identical with the D. Grafton, provided, in Sept., 1357, to the church of Yscifiog, Flint. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 301.) He died in possession of this prebend, on 10 March, 1394. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 735.)

Adam de Warton. It would appear that he was admitted to the prebend from which Cubbelegh was ejected, in July, 1367. He was probably a native of the neighbourhood, as his name occurs once as " Waverton ". (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 118.) In May, 1353, he was dispensed by the pope for having, in ignorance of the law, received the orders of deacon and subdeacon, although his parents were related in the fourth degree. (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 513.) Had left Chester before 1393. (See John Lace.)

William de Sancto Claro. Doubtless a kinsman of John, with whom he exchanged, on 31 Jan., 1371, the free chapel of St. Radegund in St. Paul's, for the latter's prebend of St. John's. He had left Chester before May, 1385. (See John de Lincoln.)

Hugh de Gaudeby. 4 July, 1379, nominated by the king to a prebend in St. John's, in accordance with power granted to him, by Pope Urban VI, to nominate two persons for prebend or other dignity in all cathedral and collegiate churches in England, Wales and Ireland. (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 367.) In Feb., 1394, he occurs as one of the masters in chancery, and is rewarded for more than thirty years' good service in chancery. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 378.) The king presented him to the church of Kenwick, Norfolk,

[1] It would seem however that he was not a permanent resident at Lichfield as is here implied. Mrs. Jenkins finds him resident only in this year.

in April, 1377 (*Cal. Pat., 1374–7*, p. 468), in Nov., 1389, to the church of Clynnog Vawr, Carnarvon (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 147); in Oct., 1390, to the church of Horwood, Linc. dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 316); in Nov., 1390, to the church of West Hanningfield, Essex (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 319); in May, 1391, to a prebend in the collegiate church of Wimborne (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 421); and in March, 1399, the church of Welsh Bicknor, Hereford dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 495).

William de Norton. March, 1379, nominated by the king with Gaudeby as above (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 329); resigned 8 Dec., 1395. There seems to have been more than one prominent cleric of this name, about this time, but in view of the close connections between St. John's and the chapter of Lichfield, it is fairly safe to identify him with William Norton, king's clerk and almoner of Queen Anne, who was presented by the king to the prebend of Dassat Parva in the latter church in Dec., 1386. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 249.)

John Lace (or Laars). 1380, occurs as canon. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 184.) *c.* 1384–90, he was rector of Plemstall, which was in the gift of the dean of St. John's. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, pp. 810.) Feb., 1393, king ratified his estate as canon and prebendary of the prebend which was John de Cravene's. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 213.) 14 Sept., 1393, resigned.

William de Blumehull (or Blumenhull). 3 March, 1381, Blumenhull exchanged his prebend with John Parker for the free chapel of Tothill. Sept., 1376, presented by the king to the church of Weston under Lizard, Staffordshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1374–7*, p. 344.) Feb., 1380, exchanged for the church of Blymhill (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81*, p. 428), of which place he was probably a native.

John Parker, *clerk*. March, 1381, exchanged with Blumenhull as above. Feb., 1387, he obtained the king's ratification of his possession of this prebend (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 286), but so did **Thomas Knight** (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 279), and, in May, 1388, the ratification of Parker's estate was revoked, on the grounds that it was obtained in fraud of Knight. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 400.)

John Lincoln of Grimsby. 22 May, 1385 (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, p. 566), grant to the king's clerk, John Lincoln of Grimsby, of the prebend in the collegiate church of Chester lately held by William de Seintclere, in the king's gift by reason of the temporalities . . . being in his hands. He would seem to have given up this prebend before Feb., 1387. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 279.) He occurs as king's clerk as early as 1376. (*Cal. Clos., 1374–7*, p. 470.) He became a chamberlain of the receipt of the exchequer, Oct., 1386 (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 232), and was arrested at the time of the Merciless Parliament, as one of the king's close personal adherents. (Steele, *Richard II*, p. 143.) King's secretary 1395–9. (*Ibid.*, p. 218.) He held a great number of livings, at one time or another, including the archdeaconry of Huntingdon (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 157), the deanery of the royal free chapel of Tettenhall (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 14), the deanery of the collegiate church of Holyhead (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 685), prebends of York (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 216), Lichfield (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, pp. 409, 461), Lincoln (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 24), Wells, Salisbury, St. David's (*ibid.*), Llandaff (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 416), and Dublin (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 332).

William de Newhagh. 5 Feb., 1386, presented to Newenham's prebend by the king, the temporalities of the see being in his hands. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 101.) 29 Jan., 1375, Wm. de N. acolyte collated to the hospital of Denwall with the annexed church of Burton (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 178), and he held it until 1400 (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 543). Canon of Lichfield, 1370–8 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 631, 589), precentor of Lichfield, 1378–90 (*ibid.*, p. 579), and archdeacon of Chester, 1390–1413 (*ibid.*, p. 566). In May, 1413, he exchanged this last preferment for the church of Halsall (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 103), and the prebend of Dassat Parva, Lichfield, 1413–23 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 598). He was vicar-general of the diocese in 1421. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, p. 8.) He is said to have resigned his prebend, Nov., 1404, in exchange for the hospital of Denwall, but this information does not agree with that given in Ormerod's list of masters. (Vol. II, p. 534.)

Thomas Knyght. 13 Feb., 1387, ratification of the estate of Thomas Knyght as prebendary of the prebend in the collegiate church of St. John, Chester, lately held by William de Sancto Claro. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 279.) As we have seen, this was a vindication of his right to possession as against the rival claims of John Parker. 6 July, 1394, exchanged for the church of Hanslope. His possession of this church was ratified in Sept., 1397. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 195.)

William Leche. 25 Oct., 1390 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 314), grant by the king to him of the prebend lately held by John de Cravene. He had ceased to hold it by Feb., 1393, when it was confirmed in the possession of John Laars (see page 142). In Aug., 1390 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 299), he was presented to the church of Waverton, but his name is not to be found among Ormerod's list of rectors (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 789).

John Dutton. 22 Aug., 1391, papal mandate, to the abbot of St. Werburgh, Chester, to make provision to John Dutton, rector of Cheadle in that diocese, bachelor of canon and civil law, if found fit after examination, of a canonry and to reserve to him a prebend of St. John's, Chester; notwithstanding that he holds the said rectory and the sinecure chapel of St. Mary Barrow, in the said diocese. (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 417.) Nov., 1389 (*ibid.*, p. 346), provided in same terms to canonry and reservation of a prebend at Lichfield. 30 May, 1391, the king presented Mr. John Dutton to the church of Thornton-le-Moors. (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 415.) He died in 1395, being at that time parson of Cheadle. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 630.)

William Hebden, *clericus*. Collated, vice Laars, 14 Sept., 1393. (Lich. Reg., vol. VI, p. 47.) Preb. Dernford, 1391–2. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 596.) Curborough, 1392–3. (*Ibid.*, p. 593.) 1393–4, master of the hospital of St. John. (Stewart-Brown, "The Hospital of St. John," *Hist. Soc. Lancs & Ches.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 104.)

Ralph de Hatton, *clericus*. 26 Nov., 1393, collated to the prebend formerly held by A. de Stokes. He resigned Sept., 1394. In May, 1382, Ralph de Hatton, king's clerk, was appointed as keeper of the king's private wardrobe in the tower, and still held that office in June, 1385. (*Cal. Pat., 1381–5*, pp. 114, 574.) 1391 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 498), presented to the church of Kinmerch, Denbighshire, by the king. Occurs, 1393, prebendary of Wells. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 249.) Sept., 1395, grant to him as king's

clerk of the deanery of Holyhead. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 619.) He was dead by Oct., 1401 (*Cal. Pat., 1401–5*, p. 13), and is then said to have held a prebend in the free chapel of St. Buryan, Cornwall.

He may have been a native of the city, as his name was a common one there, and perhaps he is to be identified with that Ranulf or Randle de Hatton (not said to be a clerk), who was one of the founders of the Fraternity of St. Anne in the collegiate church, in March, 1393 (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 248), and one of the wardens of the Fraternity, in 1396 (Harl. 2061, f. 22).

Mr. John Sutton. Collated vice Hebden, 8 Feb., 1394. As he also occurs as warden of the free chapel of Barrow, in August, 1395 (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 625), it is possible that there is some confusion here with John Dutton. However, there was a John Sutton who occurs as canon of Lichfield, between Oct., 1393, and Dec., 1396. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, pp. 533–4; *1396–9*, p. 55.) It is impossible to identify him further because the name was extremely common.

Thomas Parker, *clericus*. 13 March, 1394, collated to Grafton's prebend, and resigned it within a month. Occurs as prebendary of Lichfield, 1397–1424 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 592, 596), Lincoln, 1405–11 (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 123), and York, 1410 (*ibid.*, vol. III, p. 169), died 1424 (*ibid.*, vol. I, 502).

Thomas Hanley, *chaplain*. (*Cal. Pat., 1401–5*, p. 247.) Collated in Parker's place, 8 April, 1394. Jan., 1391, chancellor of Hereford and prebendary of Lichfield. (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 290.) March, 1399, he exchanged a prebend of Windsor with Robert de Ravendale, for the church of Byfield, Lincoln dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 493.) It is curious that there is no mention here of the Chester prebend, because, in Ormerod's list, Hanley is said to have exchanged it with Ravendale for Byfield. Either there is an error in one of these sources, or the prebend at St. John's was given in part exchange, together with a prebend at Windsor. Oct., 1399, ratified as parson of Byfield, chancellor of Hereford, prebendary of Lichfield, dean of the royal free chapel of Tettenhall, and warden of the chapel of Kibworth. (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 136.) He died in 1422, being at that time still a prebendary of Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 606.)

William de Moreton. 6 July, 1394, exchanged the church of Hanslope with Thomas Knyght for a prebend here. He was dead before 26 April, 1395. He is almost certainly the same William de Morton who, in May, 1364, was treasurer of the wife of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (*Papal Petitions*, pp. 494–5), since the church of Hanslope was in the gift of the Beauchamps. In 1364, he was rector of Holt, Worcester dio., and canon of Lichfield with expectation of a prebend. (*Ibid.*) In Oct., 1397, he was stated to have lately held a prebend in the church of St. Mary, Warwick. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 211.)

Thomas Feriby. 6 Sept., 1394, "reverendus pater dominus Thomas Feriby" was collated to the prebend, made void by the resignation of Hatton. He exchanged it, 14 March, 1411, for the parish church of St. Andrew Cornhill. In 1391, he occurs as servitor of the king's uncle, the duke of Gloucester (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 375), and was still in the duke's service in 1395 (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, pp. 512, 533). As early as 1373, he is called king's clerk (*Cal. Pat., 1370–4*, p. 67), and, in Sept., 1399, he was appointed by the new government as third baron of the exchequer (*Cal.*

Pat., 1399–1401, p. 8). It would appear therefore that he was of Lancastrian sympathies. He was doubtless a member of the Yorkshire family of this name, which was so prominent in the administration in the middle of the fourteenth century. (*Tout*, vol. III, p. 215, vol. IV, pp. 79, 148, n. 1.) He enjoyed numerous preferments in the cause of his career, and, in 1398 (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 260), he held in addition to this prebend, one at York and one at Beverley, besides the church of Fordingbridge, Wiltshire.

John Hall, *priest.* Collated 26 April, 1395, to the prebend void by the death of William de Morton. He had died or resigned before May, 1398.

Mr. Robert de Ravendale. Nov., 1388 (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 528), exchanges church of Codreth, Lincoln dio., for church of Tempsford, in the same dio. 1389, exchanges again for church of Littlebury, London dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 20.) 1392–5, rector of St. Martin's, Ludgate. (*Hennessey*, p. 292.) In Nov., 1395, he exchanged St. Martin's with William Norton, for the church of Byfield (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 635), and as, on 8 Dec., he succeeded to Norton's prebend in St. John's, it looks as though this was a part of the same arrangement. 12 July, 1396, exchanged this prebend with Henry Malpas for the prebend of Gaia minor in the cathedral church of Lichfield, which he continued to hold until 1398. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 609.) In March, 1399, as noticed above, he exchanged the church of Byfield with Thomas Hanley for a prebend of Windsor and another in St. John's. 3 August, 1403, exchanged this latter prebend with William Lochard for the church of All Saints, Hastings. He was still a prebendary of Windsor at the time of his death, in April, 1404. (*Cal. Pat., 1401–5*, p. 382.)

Henry Malpas. By exchange with Ravendale as above. He occurs frequently as king's clerk, between April, 1390 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 238), and 1399 (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 535), and was certainly employed in the chancery (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 65). April, 1390 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 238), the king presented him to the church of Potterspury (Northants), Lincoln dio. In the following June, he exchanged it for St. Andrew's, Barnard's Castle (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 257), from which he resigned almost at once (*Hennessey*, p. 87). Jan., 1391, king presented him to Settrington, Yorkshire (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 358), and in May, 1391 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 406), to Tempsford (Bedford), Lincoln dio. In July, 1392, he was granted certain lands in Hedon, Yorkshire, towards his maintenance (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 108), and in Oct., 1393, he was presented to the church of Potton (Bedford), Lincoln dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 327), in May, 1395, to a prebend in the church of St. Cross, Crediton (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 566). April, 1399, to the prebend of Warthill, York. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 535.) Ratified as prebendary of Lichfield, 1397. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 259.) He seems to have survived the Lancastrian revolution, for in Oct., 1399 (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 4), Henry IV ratified his estate as parson of Potton, prebendary of Ruyton in the church of Lichfield, and of St. John's.

Richard Coningeston, *Doctor of Laws.* (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 611.) 2 June, 1398, presented by the king to the prebend recently in the possession of John Hall, the temporalities of the see of Lichfield being in his hands. (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 350.) March, 1387, the king presented him to a prebend of York (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 298), and, in the following year, to the archdeaconry of York (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 444). Prebendary of

Lincoln, 1388–95 (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 123), exchanged Oct., 1395, for the higher moiety of Malpas (*Ormerod*, vol. II p. 606), and again, in 1404, for the church of Brandsburton, York dio. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 91). 1393–1409, canon and prebendary of Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 611, 640.) 1393, official of the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. (*C.P.L.*, vol. IV, p. 534.) Occurs as vicar-general of that diocese in 1396 (Lich. Reg., vol. VI, f. 110) and 1398 (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 326). He was one of the custodians of spiritualities of the see, during the vacancy created by the translation of Bishop Scrope to York. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 1.) May, 1402, grant to him, as king's clerk, of a prebend in the collegiate church of Southwell (*Cal. Pat., 1401–5*, p. 91), and, in Aug., 1405 (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, p. 42), of a prebend of Beverley. 2 May, 1405, he exchanged his prebend in St. John's for one in the chapel of the Blessed Mary, York.[1]

William Lochard, *clericus*. 3 Aug., 1403, obtained a prebend here, by an exchange with Ravendale for the church of All Saints, Hastings. 11 April, 1413, he exchanged again for a prebend of Windsor. He was " of great and noble race ". (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 158.) In March, 1399, he occurs as king's servant (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 486), and in 1413, as one of the clerks of the king's chapel (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 464). 14 Aug., 1409, he resigned from the parish church of Croston. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 98.) In Nov., 1429 (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 158), he held the rectory of Clewer (co. Berks.), the deanery of the free chapel of St. Buryan, which was in his possession as early as 1410 (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 117), a prebend of Windsor, and one of Hereford (which had come into his hands in about 1400. *Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 497). From 1435–9, when he died, he was precentor of Hereford. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 486.)

Robert de Wolveden resigned from a prebend 7 Nov., 1404. There appears to be no record of his institution. Called king's clerk in 1406 and 1410. (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, p. 265 ; 1408–13, p. 169.) 1390–1426, precentor of Lichfield (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 579), and dean from 1426 until his death in Nov., 1432 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 562). Oct., 1399, prebendary of Beverley. (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 62.) 1400–26, prebendary of York ; 1426–32, treasurer. (*Le Neve*, vol. III, pp. 161, 196, 205, 217, 222.) March, 1406, presented to the church of Withybrook, Lichfield dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, p. 159.) Nov., 1406, the king granted him the archdeaconry of Norwich. (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, p. 265.) Dec., 1407, prebendary of Windsor. (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, p. 391.) Sept., 1409, warden for life of the hospital of St. Nicholas, York. (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 104.) 1410, dean of Wolverhampton. (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 169.) July, 1412, exchanged his prebend of Windsor for the deanery of the royal free chapel of Tettenhall. (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 415.)[2]

Thomas Hebden (or Heppeden), *clericus*. Collated 7 Nov., 1404. He is then described as clerk, but it is probable that he was very young indeed, and had only taken the first tonsure. In May, 1421, Thomas Heppeden, *in legibus licentiatus*, of the diocese of Lichfield. was ordained accolite.

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[1] He died in 1413, being then in possession of the three last named prebends and the church of Hickling, and was buried at Southwell. (Willis, *A Survey of the Cathedrals*, vol. I, p. 151.)

[2] He also held a prebend of Southwell from ante 1404 till death. (*Le Neve*, vol. III, pp. 438, 447.)

(*Reg. Chichele*, vol. IV, p. 343.) In Dec., he was ordained deacon to the title of his prebend (*ibid.*, p. 348), and, in the following March, priest (*ibid.*, p. 351.) July, 1427, he was collated, by Archbishop Chichele, to the rectory of Southchurch; described as LL.D. (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 246.) Oct., 1427 (*ibid.*, p. 248), exchanged for church of Boldon, Durham dio. 5 Feb., 1430, papal dispensation to him, who is of knightly race, rector of Boldon, chancellor of Bishop Thomas (Langley of Durham), canon of St. John's, Chester, and prebendary of the prebend there called the 3rd of Holy Cross (the church being valued at 40 marks and the prebend at 6), to hold for life the said church and any other benefice with cure. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 167.)

William Piers. Exchanged with Newhagh, as above, Nov., 1404.

Nicholas Tydde, *clericus.* 2 May, 1405, exchanges a canonry and prebend in the chapel of the Blessed Mary, York, for one in St. John's. 5 June, 1409, exchanges again for the church of Wheatacre, Norfolk.

William Ulf of Oudeby, I.U.B. 16 Nov., 1406. (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, p. 268.) Whereas the pope has made provision to Wm. Ulf of Oudeby, bachelor in civil law, of a canonry and prebend in the collegiate churches of Chester and Gnosall, the king pardons the trespass and grants licence for the execution of the bull. Feb., 1412 (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 246), dispensation for seven years to Wm. Ulf, rector of Iden, Chichester dio., bachelor of canon and civil law, to hold another benefice worth not more than 30 marks, i.e., he must have given up the Chester prebend before this date. In the same month (*ibid.*, p. 327) indult to him, a sub-deacon, to farm the fruits of his benefices, whilst studying at a University, or residing in the Roman curia, or at one of his benefices.

John Cotes of Tealby. 5 June, 1409, obtained a prebend here by exchange with Tydde as above. 3 Sept., 1410, exchanged with Walton for the prebend of Thorngate in Lincoln cathedral. He was instituted, in 1393, on the presentation of Sir Ralph Cromwell, to Stanhoe, Norfolk (Blomefield, *Hist. Norfolk*, vol. X, p. 384), and held it until 1403. Rector of Willoughby, Lincs., 1405–33; 1405–15, vicar of Searly, Lincs.; 1409, instituted to parish church of Wheatacre, and exchanged it for Chester prebend. 1415–16, vicar of Northope, Lincs. 1416–19, rector of Grainthorpe, Lincs. July, 1419, obtained a prebend in Southwell. 1420–21, vicar of Skillington, Lincs.; May–Dec., 1422, rector of Friesthorpe, Lincs. He was a residentiary canon of Lincoln in 1432, and died in the following year. His will survives but contains no reference to Chester. (Thompson, *Lincolnshire Visitations*, vol. I, p. 212.)

Thomas Walton. 3 Sept., 1410, exchanged with Cotes as above, and exchanged this prebend, 22 July, 1418, with Richard Ferriby, for a prebend in the collegiate church of St. Mary by the castle, Leicester. (Lich. Reg., vol. VIII, f. 20.) Bachelor of canon law. (Thompson, *Lincolnshire Visitations*, vol. I, p. 202.) In July, 1414, appointed, during pleasure, as king's chamberlain of North Wales, and this appointment was renewed in 1422. (*Cal. Pat., 1413–16*, p. 229; 1422–9, p. 3.) He was collated Thorngate prebend, Lincoln, Jan., 1408, and exchanged it for this prebend as already noticed; 1414, rector of Barton-in-the-Clay, Bedfordshire; 1415–19, prebendary of Aylesbury, Lincoln; 1419 till death, prebendary of Leighton Buzzard there; 1416, prebendary of Moreton Magna, Hereford. In 1439,

he exchanged this last and Barton-in-the-Clay for Cottenham, Cambridgeshire; he died in 1451. (Thompson, *Lincolnshire Visitations*, vol. I, p. 202.)

John Sudbury. 14 March, 1410/11, obtained a prebend here, by exchange with Thomas Feriby for the church of St. Andrew, Cornhill. He resigned from it in Sept., 1444. His career appears to be confused with that of one or more other clerics of the same name. He may be identical with the John Sudbury who was registrar of the bishop of London, in 1417 (*Reg. Chichele*, p. cxvii), was dispensed in Jan., 1418, as rector of High Ham, Somerset, from proceeding to priests' orders for three years, while he remained in the service of the bishop of London, provided that he was ordained subdeacon within a year, and occurs as a canon of St. Paul's, in March, 1421. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VII, pp. 46, 331.)

Henry Drayton. 18 April, 1413, by exchange with Lochard of the royal free chapel within the castle of Windsor. Feb., 1421, exchanged with John Leyot for the prebend of Pipa Parva, Lichfield; 1413, he was a clerk of the king's chapel. (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 464.) Feb., 1396, presented by king to North Cove, Suffolk (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 667), and, in 1397, to Mickleton, Gloucestershire (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 269). In 1398, described as king's clerk, he was granted the wardenship of the hospital of St. John, Bristol (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 452), and exchanged North Cove for the wardenship of the free chapel of Ingestre (*ibid.*, p. 410). March, 1400, king presented him to the vicarage of Dartford. (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 232.) June, of the same year, to the rectory of Earl's Norton (Norton St. Philip), Somerset. (*Ibid.*, p. 292). 1406–7, rector, Waltham, Lincolnshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1405–8*, pp. 281, 385.) 1407–before 1414, vicar of St. Giles, Cripplegate. (*Hennessey*, p. 172.) 1406–7, vicar of St. Martin, West Drayton. (*Ibid.*, p. 134.) March, 1411, granted a prebend of Windsor. (*Cal. Pat., 1408–13*, p. 272.)

Richard Feriby. 22 July, 1418, exchanged with Walton as above. Presumably, like Thomas Feriby (see above), he too was a member of the prominent administrative family.

Mr. Major Parys. Occurs, in August, 1416, as a canon of St. John's, being so described when he witnessed the will of John Catterick, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. II, pp. 179. 181, 182.) It does not follow, of course, that he held a prebend. He is found as "priest of the diocese of Exeter", in 1413 and 1421. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 346; vol. VII, p. 249.) In February, of the latter year, he was appointed to the office of papal notary.

Mr. John Leyot. 6 Feb., 1421, obtained Drayton's prebend by exchange of the prebend of Pipa Parva in Lichfield cathedral. He was dead before Feb., 1428. It is virtually impossible to distinguish between the careers of John Leyot, the elder, and John Leyot, the younger. It is assumed that the elder was the dean and the younger the prebendary. The elder was presented, by the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh's, to the rectory of Coddington, in March, 1394 (Lich, Reg., vol. VI, f. 58), and resigned, in Sept., following, in favour of John, the younger, who held this living until about 1408. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 735.) Before Dec., 1402, the latter was presented by the abbot to the rectory of St. Peter in Chester. His right to possession was disputed by one John Crissenhale, who had been presented

by the bishop of Lichfield. (See below.) He therefore sought and obtained confirmation of his right from the pope (*C.P.L.*, vol. V, p. 525), and from the prince of Wales (Harl. 2071, f. 19). He was still rector in July, 1405. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 19.) Admitted to the prebend of Pipa Parva, June, 1406. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 620.) This rector of St. Peter's was also in the service of the prince of Wales. (Harl. 2071, f. 19.) Another kinsman was Richard Leyot, dean of this church, 1423–31. (See above.)

Thomas Hill. 16 Aug., 1424, Mr. Thomas Hill, clerk, was collated to a canonry and the third prebend of Holy Cross. He had left this prebend by 5 May, 1426, when Hichekyn was collated to it. He may not have left the collegiate church, however, because he was described, in a papal dispensation of 1425, as the holder of the seventh prebend of Holy Cross. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VII, p. 391.) In 1422, he became archdeacon of Chester. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 112.) He had resigned by March, 1423. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 567.) Sept., 1425 (*C.P.L.*, *loc. cit.*), he was dispensed as rector of Walgrave, Northants, to hold it for life with another benefice.

John Parker. Oct., 1424, resigned from the 4th prebend of the Cross.

Gregory Newport. 3 Oct., 1424, Mr. G. N., bachelor in canon law, collated to a canonry and the 5th prebend of the Cross. 14 Nov., 1426, he resigned from this prebend and was succeeded by Richard Newport, presumably a kinsman. At this point, there seems to be a confusion in the register. 6 Aug., 1427, Gregory is made to exchange a prebend with Heydock for one in the free chapel of Penkridge. Gregory was collated to another prebend, the 2nd of the Cross, 25 Feb., 1428, when it was vacated by the death of John Leyot. He resigned it on 17 Aug., 1433. In 1424, he obtained the church of Burton and the hospital of Denwall. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 113.) 1426–31, prebendary of Dassat Parva, Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 599.) 1443–*c.* 1459, prebendary of Flixton there. (*Ibid.*, p. 603.) 1425, archbishop's commissary to inquire into the cause of the vacancy of the hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr, Birmingham. (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. I, p. 256.) 1431–6, archdeacon of Salop. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 574.) Found as rector of Hanbury, Staffordshire, 1447 (*C.P.L.*, vol. X, p. 351), and he was still there at the time of his death, in 1459. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 3.)

Dom. John Hichekyn, *capellanus.* 5 May, 1426, collated to the 3rd prebend of the Cross on the north side, and resigned March, 1441. Thomas Hebden (see above) occurs as prebendary of this prebend, 5 Feb., 1430. This may be a clerical error, but exchanges of stalls within the chapter were not uncommon and provide a ready explanation of this apparent discrepancy.

Richard Newport, *clericus*; 4 Nov., 1426, collated to the 4th prebend of the Cross, vacated by the resignation of Gregory Newport. In Dec., he exchanged it with **Robert Merflete** for the prebend of Cledy, in St. David's. It would seem, however, that this exchange was ruled invalid for some reason, because Gregory Newport is again found in possession of this prebend and exchanged it, 6 Aug., 1427, with Heydok.

Mr. Walter Heydok exchanged with Gregory Newport as above. He was dead before Aug., 1438, when a new collation was made. There is a most interesting notice of him in the *Calendar of Papal Letters* (vol. VIII, p. 589). 9 Oct., 1436, mandate to the abbot (of Chester) . . . at the recent

petition of Walter Heydock, a canon of St. John's, containing that inasmuch as he has held for some time, by tolerance of the ordinary of the place, and of the chapter of St. John's and was still holding, a canonry of St. John's and the prebend called the 4th prebend of the Cross on the south side, and also the vicarage choral without cure, and by reason of it a stall, and had received, and was still receiving, their fruits, &c., value not exceeding 8 marks, together with his daily distributions, whenever he was present at divine offices, [and that the bishop's commissaries had] granted him indult, the said chapter consenting, to continue to hold together for life the said canonry and prebend and vicarage as he had hitherto done. . . . If he (i.e. the abbot) find the said indult and ordinance lawful, to confirm them.

Dom. Thomas Lye, *priest.* 17 Aug., 1433, collated to the 2nd prebend of the Cross on the north side, vacated by the resignation of Gregory Newport. (In 1455, this prebend is found in the possession of Henry Simon.) He was archdeacon of Salop, from 1450 to 1462. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 574.) He may be identical with Thomas Lyes, prebendary of South Scarle in the church of Lincoln, whose biography is given by Thompson in *Lincolnshire Visitations*, vol. I, p. 209.

Roger Walle, *clerk.* Aug., 1438, collated to the 4th prebend of the cross on the south side. 1434, presented to the wardenship of the hospital of Denwall. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 122.) 1440, exchanges Denwall and preb. here for prebend of Offley, Lichfield. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 124.) 1445, again presented to Denwall (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 127), from which he finally resigned in 1449 (Lich. Reg., vol. X, f. 56). 1442, archdeacon of Stafford. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 572.) 1443, collated to prebend Eccleshall, Lichfield (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 601), which he held till death (*ibid.*). 1442 until death in 1488, archdeacon of Coventry. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 569.) He was one of the custodians of the see after the death of Bishop Reginald Boulers in 1459 (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 1), and, in 1461, he was one of the proctors of the clergy of the diocese in Convocation. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 127.)

Richard Hopper. 7 Sept., 1439, he resigned from a prebend in St. John's, which would seem to have been the one called " the 4th of the Cross on the north side ".

Thomas Flygh. Collated 7 Sept., 1439, to the 4th prebend of the Cross on the north side, which he seems to have held until his death, before 26 Nov., 1451.

Dom. Edmund Tebbot, *priest.* 15 Sept., 1440, exchanged with Walle as above, the prebend of Offley, Lichfield, for the 4th prebend of the Cross on the south side, at St. John's, which he held until his death, before 16 May, 1445. Walle also gave him the hospital of Denwall in part exchange (see above). 21 April, 1419, exchanged the church of Peldon, London dio., for a moiety of Wallasey. (Lich. Reg., vol. VIII, f. 20.) 1438–40, prebendary of Mora in St. Paul's. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 410.)

Dom. John Seton, *priest.* Collated March, 1441, to the 3rd prebend of the Cross on the North side ; resigned 15 Nov., 1451. 1426–42, rector of Crewkerne, Somerset. (*Hennessey*, p. L.) 1437–42, minor canon of St. Paul's. (*Ibid.*, p. 61.) 1443–4, rector of St. Margaret, Fish Street.

(*Ibid.*, p. 275.) 1447–8, rector of St. Margaret Moses. (*Ibid.*, p. 341.) 1450, chaplain of the chantry in the cloisters of Christ Church, Canterbury, for the soul of Edward late prince of Wales. (*Hennessey*, p. L.)

Mr. John Bolde. Resigned from a prebend here, 9 Feb., 1443. Took the first tonsure in May, 1418 (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. IV, p. 333), but seems never to have proceeded to priest's orders. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VII, p. 412.) 1425, appointed papal notary. (*Ibid.*) In 1426, 1437, 1440, he occurs as clerk and continual commensal member of the household of the archbishop of Canterbury. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 658; *Reg. Chichele*, vol. I, p. 102; p. lxxix.) In Oct., 1437 (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 658), he was dispensed, as rector of Adisham, Kent, to hold it for life together with another incompatible benefice. In 1443, royal ratification of the estate of the king's clerk, John Bolde, as canon of the cathedral church of Lichfield, and prebendary of the prebend of Flixton there . . . for good service to Henry V. (*Cal. Pat., 1441–6*, p. 150.) He died before 21 May, 1443, leaving vacant the prebend of South Malling, Sussex (*ibid.*, p. 171), the church of Bourne, Kent (*ibid.*, p. 172,) a prebend of the collegiate church of Wingham, Kent. (*Ibid.*, p. 177.) Prof. E. F. Jacob writes (Introd., *Reg. Chichele*, vol. I, p. clxxi n.), "The Lancashire tradition in the familia of the Archbishop (i.e. Chichele) needs working out . . . the Bolde family was prominent in Wigan during the later middle ages and John Bolde may be one of them." It may be added there there was also a Bolde family, which held lands in Wallasey, Liscard, and Bebington, in the fifteenth century, several of whose members were prominent in the administration of the Palatinate. (C.R.R., in *Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, pp. 55, 56.)

Mr. John Sothewell, collated to Bolde's prebend 9 Feb., 1442/3. He resigned 21 May, 1452, when his prebend was described as the 2nd of the Cross on the south side. In Oct., 1447, he is described as M.A., rector of Kneesall, canon of Chester and Southwell, and "almoner and commensal member of the household" of Cardinal Kempe, archbishop of York. (*C.P.L.*, vol. X, p. 7.)

Mr. Robert Rokke, M.A., collated to the prebend vacated by John Sudbury, 15 Sept., 1444, which he held until his death, before 13 Oct., 1458. 1438–58, vicar St. Laurence, Jewry. (*Hennessey*, p. 266.) July, 1444, one of the proctors of the abbess and convent of the exempt monastery of St. Saviour, Syon. (*Cal. Pat., 1441–6*, p. 274.)

Dom. Hugh Lache, *priest.* 16 May, 1445, collated to the 4th prebend of Holy Cross on south side, vacated by death of Tebbot. He resigned 19 March, 1446.

John Worseley, collated vice Lache as above. Dispensation, 16 Dec., 1455 (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 94), to John Worseley I.U.B. . . . (who was formerly dispensed for defect of birth and obtained parish church of Bolton le Moors) to receive and retain for life, any benefices of any number and kind, with or without cure, compatible with one another or with the aforesaid benefice, even if canonries and prebends, etc.

Mr. Edward Whitforde, *bachelor in canon law,* was collated 15 Nov., 1451, to 3rd prebend of the Cross on the north side, vacated by resignation

of Seton. He himself resigned 11 August, 1465. In Oct., 1442 (*Cal. Pat., 1441–6*, p. 126), exchanged church of Llangwn cum Dinmael, St. Asaph dio., for church of Horsepath, Oxford.

Mr. Robert Bromezerde, *capellanus*. 26 Nov., 1451, collated to the 4th prebend of the Cross on the north side, which he held until his death, before 23 Dec., 1457. In Dec., 1455, he obtained papal dispensation (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 95) as perpetual vicar of Hackney, and chaplain to the archbishop of York, to hold another benefice with the said vicarage. Appointed to the vicarage of Hackney, Sept., 1440. (*Hennessey*, p. 178.)

Mr. Robert Thornton, *bachelor of decrees*. 21 May, 1452, collated to the 2nd prebend of the Cross on the south side, which he held until his death before 4 Jan., 1458. In Jan., 1438 (*C.P.L.*, vol. IX, p. 6), he is found as perpetual vicar of St. Giles, Cripplegate, rector of a moiety of the parish church of Isham, Northants, and canon of St. Mary's, Stafford. He was presented to St. Giles, July, 1428, and exchanged it, in 1440, for the rectory of Cottesmore, Rutland. (*Hennessey*, pp. 172, XC.)

Mr. George Radclyf, *doctor of decrees* ; at the time of his death, before 11 Sept., 1453, he was canon of St. John's and prebendary of the 3rd prebend of the Cross on the south side. 28 April, 1408, presented to the church of Eccleston. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 96.) 1418–24, rector of Wimslow. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 595.) 1436–49, treasurer of Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 582.) 1447 and 53, vicar-general of the bishop of Lichfield. (Lich. Reg., vol. X, f. 6, and vol. XI, f. 8.) 1449–53, archdeacon of Chester. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 567.) 1451, obtained an indult to visit by proxy. Then described as the son of a knight by lawful marriage, over 67, and resident at Lichfield. (*C.P.L.*, vol. X, p. 228.) May, 1452, licence to found a chantry, to be called the Radclyf chantry, in Lichfield cathedral. (*Cal. Pat., 1446–52*, p. 549.) He died in 1453, and was buried in Lichfield cathedral. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 114.) He is said to have made various benefactions to the cathedral, in the benefactions book displayed there. At the time of his death, he was also rector of Winwick, Lancashire. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 37.)

Dom. John Whelpdale, *chaplain*, collated 11 Sept., 1453, to the 3rd prebend of the Cross on the south side. Resigned 2 Oct., 1454. In 1448, he was rector of Thursby and receiver-general of the bishop of Carlisle. (*C.P.L.*, vol. X, p. 42.) 1454–90, prebendary Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 614, 630.) 1461, one of the proctors of the clergy of Lichfield diocese at Convocation. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 127.)

William Dudley, *clerk*, collated 2 Oct., 1454, to 3rd prebend of the Cross on the south side. He resigned 13 May, 1460. Probably the future bishop of Durham (see *D.N.B.*) who was rector of half Malpas, 1457–75. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 83 ; vol. XII, f. 109.) Younger, probably third, son of John Sutton de Dudley, Baron Dudley; educated at University College, Oxford, proceeding B.A., 1453–4, M.A. 1456–7. (*D.N.B.*) Thus his prebend was really a post-graduate scholarship, and until 1457, at least, he was not in Holy Orders. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 83.)

Henry Simon, resigned, 17 Sept., 1455, from the 2nd prebend of Holy Cross on north side.

William Asser, *chaplain,* collated to the above prebend, void by Simon's resignation. Rector of Tarporley, 1446–81, when he died. (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 234.) He was ordained deacon, only in 1451 (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 5), and was, in 1453, dispensed from proceeding to priest's orders. (*Ibid.,* f. 9.) He was almost certainly a kinsman of Roger Asser, the rector of St. Peter's and dean of St. John's, and the two John Assers, father and son, who were successively master masons of Chester and Flint. (See Roger Asser.)

Mr. William Orell, M.A., collated 23 Dec., 1457, to the 4th prebend of Holy Cross, north side; resigned 8 Nov., 1477. 1441–at least 1455, rector of Llanystumdwy, Carnarvon. (*C.P.L.,* vol. IX, p. 157; vol. XI, p. 99.) 1445–56, rector of a moiety of Wallasey. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 127; vol. XI, f. 40.) 1453, collector of a relief or "subsidium caritatis" in the archdeaconry of Chester. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 52.) In 1455, occurs as bishop's commissary. (Lich. Reg., vol XI, f. 36.) Nov., 1455 (*C.P.L.,* vol. XI, 99), W. Orrell, M.A., rector of Llanystumdwy, Bangor dio., dispensed to hold any number of benefices. He was rector of the moiety of Eckington, Derbyshire, from about 1455 (*C.P.L.,* vol. XI, p. 99) till at least 1466 (*C.P.L.,* vol. XII, p. 817). 1457–64, vicar of Wybunbury, which was in the bishop's patronage (*Ormerod,* vol. III, p. 485) and which he exchanged for Bonsall, Derbyshire. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 42; vol. XII, f. 101.) In 1463, he was one of three persons appointed by the bishop, as commissaries for matrimonial causes in the archdeaconry of Chester, who were also to take probate of all wills there. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 138.) May, 1474, collated to the prebend of Stotfold, Lichfield. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, p. 627.) In 1441, he had obtained a papal dispensation in respect of his illegitimate birth. (*C.P.L.,* vol. IX, p. 157.)

Dom. Thomas Mason, collated 4 Jan., 1458, to the 2nd prebend of Holy Cross, south side, which he held until his death before 23 Feb., 1477. 13 Dec., 1460 (*C.P.L.,* vol. XI, p. 588), dispensation to him, who held the church of Whitbourne, Hereford dio., a canonry and prebend of the collegiate church of St. John, Chester, and the hospital of St. John, Lichfield, value not exceeding £16, £5, and £20 sterling respectively, to receive and retain for life any benefice with cure.

Mr. Owen Lloyd, LL.D., collated 13 Oct., 1458, and resigned on 26 Oct. In the same month, he was appointed official principal of the bishop of Lichfield (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 94), and in the following April he occurs as the bishop's chancellor. (*C.P.L.,* vol. XI, p. 533.)

Mr. Thomas Sutton, M.A., collated, vice Lloyd, 26 Oct., 1458, and resigned 14 May, 1489. He was also rector of the church of West Tanfield near Ripon, where there is a monumental brass to him, in the inscription of which he is described as canon of Westchester. It has been suggested that he may have been a member of the East Cheshire family, but no arms appear to be shown on the brass. (*Cheshire Sheaf,* Third Series, vol. XXXIV, p. 105.)

Dom. John Crecy, *chaplain,* collated to the third prebend of Holy Cross, south side, 13 May, 1460, resigned 13 Sept., 1462. His career is confused with that of a contemporary of the same name (or perhaps two others). Rector of St. Olaf, Chester, 1453–5. 1455–61, rector of West

Kirby. (Brownbill, *West Kirby*, p. 108.) 1461–71, vicar of Stepney. (*Ibid.*, quoting *Hennessey*, p. 411.) Sept., 1455, appointed papal notary. (*Ibid.*) 1459–68, prebendary of Dernford, Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 596.) 1457–71, dean of St. Mary, Shrewsbury. (*Cal. Pat., 1452–61*, p. 385; *1467–77*, p. 276.) Canon of Windsor, 1469 till his death in 1471 (*Le Neve*, vol. III, p. 388), and of St. Stephen's, Westminster, 1460–71 (*Cal. Pat., 1452–61*, p. 574; *1467–77*, p. 267).

Dom. Edward Massy, *priest*, collated to 3rd prebend of Holy Cross, south side, 13 Sept., 1462; died possessed of it, before 11 April, 1466; rector of Holy Trinity, Chester, 1454–63, and at the time of his death, rector of Eccleston. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 103.)

Mr. Thomas Reynolds, I.U.B., *chaplain*, collated 11 Aug., 1465, to 3rd prebend of Holy Cross, north side. He had resigned it by 11 April, 1466, when he was collated to the 3rd prebend on the south side. 14 Feb., 1478, he exchanged again, this time for the 4th prebend on the north side, from which he resigned before 5th Sept., 1483. 1453 occurs as rector of Elms, Cambridge. (*Cal. Pat., 1452–61*, p. 14.) 1459–60, vicar of Plemstall, which was in the gift of the dean of St. John's. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 809.) 1471–ante 97, prebendary Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 587, 594, 620, 632, 635, 637.) He was vicar-general in 1476 and 1491 (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 111; vol. XIII, f. 123), and held the office jointly with Thomas Milly in 1482. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 115.)

Mr. John Godefelowe, I.U.B., collated 9 Feb., 1467, to the 3rd prebend of Holy Cross, north side; vacated it before 30 June, 1493; vicar of St. Oswald, 1476, till death, 1493. Rector of Waverton, 1467–93. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 789.)

Mr. Thomas Twemlowe, B.C.L., collated, 8 Nov., 1477, to the 4th prebend of the Holy Cross on the north side. Exchanged it, 14 Feb., 1478, for the 3rd prebend on the south side. He had resigned from this before 1486. Presented to the church of Tilston, 1454 (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 697), and to that of Astbury, 1476 (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 26), and held both livings until his death in 1497. (*Ibid.*) This he was enabled to do by virtue of a papal dispensation of April, 1464. (*C.P.L.*, vol. XII, p. 212.) 1470–6, rector of Coddington. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 736.) Occurs as official of the archdeacon of Chester in 1485 (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 120), and 1490 (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, f. 121).

Mr. William Plowme, M.A., collated 23 Feb., 1478, to the second prebend of the Cross on the south side, void by the death of Mason. He probably died in possession about 1504. In Nov., 1472, he was presented to the parish church of Cholderton, Wiltshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1467–77*, p. 359.)

Ralph Cantrell (or Chauntrell), LL.D., *chaplain*, 5 Sept., 1483, collated to the 4th prebend of the Cross on the north side. In Jan., 1505, he became dean and prebendary of the first prebend (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 57) and he held the deanery until his death, before 13 March, 1530/1. In 1503, vicar-general of the bishop of Lichfield. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 1.) 1507–9, held prebend Dassat Parva in Lichfield cathedral (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 599) and, 1509–31, that of Tachbrook in the same church (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 629). He appears in the pardon roll of 1 Hen. VIII

(*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. I, no. 438 (2), m. 24) as "of Lichfield, Staffordshire, doctor of decrees, principal official, chancellor or vicar-general of Geoffrey, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, rector of Clifton All Saints, Bedfordshire, dean of St. John's, Chester, prebendary of Dorcet Parva, late of Cambridge, clerk". In all probability, he was related to the family of Chauntrell which at this date owned Bache Hall, Bache, one mile north of Chester, and held land in Dunham Massey, Hale and Altringham. (C.R.R., *Thirty-seventh Report of Deputy Keeper*, pp. 129–30.)

John Buyne was ordained successively subdeacon, deacon and priest (1486), to the title of the 3rd prebend on the south side. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 240.) No other notice of him in connection with this church occurs.

Mr. William Southworth, M.A., 15 May, 1489, collated to the prebend vacated by the resignation of Sutton. Rector of Middlewich from at least 1492 (Chester Mayors' Book, 1491–4) until 1504. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 53.) In March, 1504, the king presented him to the church of Flamstead, Hertfordshire. (*Cal. Pat., 1494–1509*, p. 341.) He died in 1520, being at that time a canon of Lichfield. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 27.) It is probable that he had resigned his prebend at St. John's as early as 1492, because he occurs in the Mayor's Book for that year, simply as rector of Middlewich. He was a member of a prominent Chester family. His father, John Southworth, was sheriff of Chester in 1449, mayor in 1467, 1474, '77, '80. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, pp. 211 and 212.) His brother-in-law, Ralph Davenport, was sheriff 1480, mayor 1489, 1493, 1501; Richard Goodman, mayor 1489 and 1503 (*ibid.*), was probably married to another of his sisters. His brother Nicholas, a layman, achieved considerable advancement in the service of Ed. IV. (See page 97; Wills of Nicholas Southworth and Ralph Davenport.)

Dom. Thomas Harsnape, *priest*, collated 30 June, 1493, to the prebend formerly held by Goodfelowe, i.e. 3rd of Cross on north side. He died in possession, before 27 of April, 1501. In May, 1486, he was presented by the king to the parish church of Wethersfield, Essex. (Campbell, *Materials for the Reign of Henry VII*, vol. I, p. 443.)

John Atkin, holder of the 4th prebend of Holy Cross, died before May, 1496. (Cooper Scott, *St. John the Baptist*, p. 34. Reg. Morton, f. 154.)

Thomas Ridley. May, 1496, presented by the king, the see of Lichfield being vacant, to the prebend formerly held by John Atkins [*sic*]. (Reg. Morton, f. 154.) He was dead before 14 Jan., 1501.

Henry Rayneforde (or Rayneforthe), LL.B., rector of Holy Trinity, 1481–1505; and vicar of St. Oswald, 1493–6; is said, by Cooper Scott (*loc. cit.*), to have been presented to the above prebend, in 1496, by Arthur, prince of Wales. Unfortunately, as no reference is given which can be checked, there must remain the possibility that he was presented. As Ridley, however, occurs in the archbishop's register, the probability is that the king's nominee ousted the prince's.

Mr. John Warderop, collated 14 Jan., 1501, to the 4th prebend of the Cross on the south side, in succession to Ridley. He had resigned before 14 April of same year. 1501–15, prebendary of Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 597, 614, 629.) 1510–11, treasurer of Hereford cathedral; 1511, until his

death in 1515, he was archdeacon of Salop, in Hereford diocese. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 483, 490.) He was a bachelor of laws. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 597.)

Mr. John Bellyngham, M.A., collated 14 April, 1501, to the 4th prebend of Holy Cross on the south side. He died before Oct., 1504. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 629.) 1500–4, prebendary of Lichfield. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 597, 629.)

Mr. Thomas Blundell, M.A., collated 27 April, 1501, to the 3rd prebend of the Cross on the north side. He held it until his death, before 29 Sept., 1535.

Mr. Edward Gregson. Collated to the 2nd prebend (on the south side ?) in 15(04?). He held it until his death, before 27 March, 1539.

Dom. Robert Clerc, *chaplain*, collated, *c.* 1505, to the 4th prebend on south side. He had vacated it sometime before Feb., 1515.

Edward Redfern resigned, before Feb., 1515, from the 4th prebend of Holy Cross. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 26.) It is difficult to trace the succession to prebends at this point, because, about this time, there is a change in their nomenclature. Henceforth, instead of being called first, second, third and fourth on north side, and similarly on the south, they are numbered simply from first to eighth. Probably Redfern's prebend was that formerly occupied by Clerc. In 1535, he was perpetual vicar of Tanworth, Warwickshire. (*Valor*, vol. III, p. 93.)

Mr. Ralph Whitehead, *bachelor of decrees*, collated to the 4th prebend Feb., 1514/15; resigned, Oct., 1515. 1514–35, prebendary of Lichfield (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 26, 27; vol. XIV, f. 19), and of the collegiate church of Gnosall, 1515–35 (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 27; vol. XIV, f. 19). He died in 1535. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIV, f. 19.)

Roger Dalyson, *clerk*, collated to the 4th prebend 27 Oct., 1515; resigned, before 22 March, 1543(?). In 1535, he was vicar of Haxey, Lincs., valued at £20 17*s.* 8*d.* per annum. (*Valor*, vol. IV, p. 134.) 1554–66, prebendary of Erpingham, in Lincoln cathedral (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 148), and precentor there. He died on 24 July, 1566, and was buried in the cathedral. (*Le Neve*, vol. II, p. 85.) It is apparent, therefore, that he was a man of hardy conscience, who was not disturbed by any of the religious changes which occurred during his long life.

Thomas Wetton held a prebend here in 1535 (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 202) and in 1548. (Chantry Certificate; *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 313.) He was then 60 years old, and possessed an income of 30 marks from other sources. 1556, drawing pension of 60*s.* (*Ibid.*, p. 315.)

Mr. Richard Strete. (See list of deans.) Prebendary here in 1535. (*Valor*. vol. V, p. 202.) He resigned from the 6th prebend when he became dean, in March, 1541. He was succeeded by **James Fowler.**

Mr. William Skelton. In 1535 (*ibid.*) he was prebendary of the 8th prebend, i.e. 4th on north side. Perhaps he had held it since Jan., 1505, when Cantrell gave it up for the deanery and the first prebend. He was also vicar of Ashby de la Zouche, valued at £14 per annum. (*Valor*, vol. IV, p. 177.) He died before 31 June, 1538.

Brian Fowler, *clerk,* collated 29 Sept., 1535, to the 3rd prebend of Holy Cross on the north side, vacated by the death of Blundell. By this date, it had become more commonly known as the 7th prebend. He resigned before 4 July, 1539.

Mr. Randle Pole, *clerk.* Held a prebend in 1535 (*Valor,* vol. V, p. 202), and at the time of his death, before 28 March, 1538. It would seem to have been the fifth prebend, as he was enjoying a third of the profits of the ' prebends lands ', and is named first after the dean. He was a younger son of Sir Thomas Pole of Poole, who succeeded to the family property by the death of his two elder brothers. (*Hist. Soc. Lancs & Ches.,* vol. LXV, p. 171 *et seq.* Ormerod, vol. II, p. 423.) Rector of Hawarden, 1505–38. (*Ibid.*) 1533–8, sinecure rector of Llandrillo in Edeyrnion. (*Ibid.*) He was prebendary of Withington in the cathedral of Hereford, 1520–38. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, p. 500.) He occurs, in 1535, as rector of Southam, Warwickshire. (*Valor,* vol. III, p. 62.) He was one of the executors of the will of Bishop Standish of St. Asaph, who was related to the Poles (*Hist. Soc. Lancs & Ches., loc. cit.*), and of Sir Thomas Butler, the founder of the Free School of Warrington (*Valor,* vol. V, p. 219). By his will, dated 12 March, 1538, he desired to be buried in St. John's.

Mr. David Pole, LL.D., collated 28 March, 1538, the prebend vacated by the death of Randle Pole. He was still here at the dissolution. He was said to be fifty years old, and to possess, in addition to his stipend, an income of £100 per annum from other sources. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 313). His prebend was one of the two most valuable ones, either the fifth or sixth. (Harl. 2045, f. 20 ; Harl. 2150, f. 229.) He was presumably a close kinsman of Randle Pole, and family influence in his appointment is strongly indicated. He had been a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, and a student of both laws. (*D.N.B.*) 1528–30, vicar of St. Giles, Oxford (*Hennessey,* p. CXXXII), and subsequently rector of East Dereham, Norfolk (*ibid.*). *Ormerod* (vol. II, p. 439) says he was rector of Bebington, 1531–5, but this is probably an error. (Richard Gwent was presented to the church of Bebington in 1531, Lich. Reg., vol. XIV, f. 66, and there is no further notice, in register, of a presentation before 1543.) In 1535, he occurs as rector of Cheriton Episcopi, Devon, which had been let at farm for a term of five years. (*Valor,* vol. II, p. 323.) 1531–57, prebendary of Tachbrook, Lichfield cathedral. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, p. 629.) 1531, one of the custodians of the spiritualities of the see of Lichfield, *sede vacante.* (Lich. Reg., vol. XIV, f. 1.) 1534, vicar-general of the bishop of Lichfield. (*Hennessey,* p. CXXXII.) 1536, archdeacon Salop. 1542, archdeacon Derby. 1540, dean of Arches and vicar-general to the archbishop of Canterbury (Cranmer). In Mary's reign, he was vicar-general to Ralph Bayne, bishop of Lichfield, and commissioner for the deprivation of married priests. He sat on the commission for the deprivation of Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer, and the restoration of Bonner. He became bishop of Peterborough in 1557. Elizabeth deprived him of his offices, but he was allowed freedom on parole in London, as an ancient and grave person and a very quiet subject. He died in 1568. (*C.N.W.A.A.S.,* vol. XXIII, p. 50 n. *D.N.B.*)

Mr. Richard Walker, collated to the 8th prebend, 31 June, 1538 ; resigned it before 10 April, 1543 ; see list of deans.

Mr. Richard Smyth, LL.B., collated to the 7th prebend, 4 July, 1539. His career difficult to trace because his name was very common. He cannot

be the same Richard Smyth, who was rector of Holy Trinity, from 1505–07, because we know that he was only 60 years old in 1548 (Chantry Certificate, *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 313), but it may have been he who was fellow of Merton in 1535. (*Valor*, vol. II, p. 227.) In 1541, he was official of the archdeacon of Chester, and one of the wardens of the fraternity of St. Anne (Harl. 1994, f. 571), which makes it fairly certain that he was then resident in the city. He was still one of the prebendaries in 1548, and was then said to possess an income of £50 per annum from other sources (*Ormerod, loc. cit.*).

Mr. Edmund Stretehay, LL.B., collated 27 March, 1539, to the 2nd prebend. Probably held it until his death in 1547. Vicar of Audlem, 1514–39. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 58; vol. XIV, f. 35.) 1538–47, vicar of Frodsham, which was in the gift of the abbot and convent of Vale Royal (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 57); prebendary of Wolvey, Lichfield, 1530–47 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 641).

Ralph Snede, LL.D., collated to the 8th prebend, 10 April, 1543. Probably dead before 1548. He was a kinsman of the Snede family of Bradwell and Willaston, which was a branch of the Snedes of Sneyd, in the parish of Burslem, and was very prominent in the affairs of the city, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. *Ormerod* names the most important members of this family as follows. (Vol. III, p. 492.)

1. William Snede of Bradwell and Chester; citizen and alderman of Chester; mayor 1479.
2. Eldest son of (1). Richard Snede of Bradwell and Willaston, esq.; recorder of Chester, 18 Henry VIII; vice-justice of Chester and North Wales.
3. Eldest son of (2). Sir William Snede of Bradwell and Willaston, kt. Sheriff of Staffordshire; fought at Pinkie Clough.
4. Younger son of (1). William Snede, citizen and draper of Chester. Sheriff, 1504; mayor, 1516, 1531 and 1543.
5. Son of (4). Richard Snede, citizen and draper. Died in 1541, while sheriff of the city.
6. Younger son of (2). Richard Snede. M.P. for Chester, 7 Ed. VI—4 Philip and Mary.

Ralph was presented to the rectory of Woodchurch in 1530, by his kinsmen William and Richard Snede ((3) and (6) above), obtaining, at the same time, a dispensation to hold it together with two other incompatible benefices. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 524.) Presumably these were the rectory of Tattenhall, which he had held since 1506 (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 720), and the vicarage of Rye, Sussex, to which he had been presented by Sir Edward Guildford in 1525 (*Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. XIII, p. 271). He also held the prebend of Bubenhall, in the cathedral church of Lichfield, 1529–ante 1549. (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 587.) In 1535, his several preferments were estimated in the *Valor* as follows: Bubenhall £1, (vol. III, p. 131). Tattenhall, £13 17*s.* 4*d.* net (vol. V, p. 211). Woodchurch, £25 9*s.* 0*d.* net (vol. V, p. 213). Rye, £42 13*s.* 4*d.* (vol. I, p. 345). Total £82 19*s.* 8*d.* His acquisition of a prebend at Chester did not, therefore, represent an appreciable increment of his income. He was chosen, in 1528, to be one of the proctors, in convocation, of the clergy of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. (*Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. IV, pt. III, p. 2,700.)

Mr. Peter Manwaringe, collated to the 4th prebend, 22 March, 1543. 1518 (C.R.R., 9 and 10 Hen. VIII, m. 1(3), *Thirty-ninth Report of the Deputy*

Keeper), appointment for life of P.M., chaplain, as master and keeper of the hospital of S. Giles. He seems to have resided in Chester at this time, because he was bound over to keep the peace in the portmoot in April, 1521. (Mayor's Book, 1520–36, f. 5.) Presented to the 3rd stall, Christ Church, 1 Feb., 1544, and held it until death. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 269.) 20 Dec., 1547, pardoned as P.M., clerk, one of the prebendaries of Chester cathedral, and of the collegiate church of St. John, late one of Henry VIII's chaplains, alias vicar of Widdicombe, Devon, parson of Lamarsh, Essex, vicar of Berny Pomeroy, Essex, master of the hospital of St. Julian [*sic*] of Boughton besides Chester, one of the prebendaries resident of the minster of Christ Church in Chester. (*Cal. Pat., 1548–9*, p. 146.) In the Chantry Certificate of 1548 (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 313), said to be 66 years old and more, and to possess an income of 100 marks beside his prebend. He was dead by Sept., 1549. (*Cal. Pat., 1549-51*, p. 21.)

Thomas Snede, presumably a relative of Ralph, was one of the prebendaries in 1548. (Chantry Certificate, *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 313.) He was then 40 years old, and possessed an income of £50 in other places.

Robert Fowler, another prebendary at that date (*ibid.*), was only 18 and had no other preferments. He was the third of the prebendaries (the dean and David Pole, the prebendary of the 2nd prebend, being the other two) who enjoyed a share of the profits of the prebends' lands. Strete held the 6th prebend, in 1535, and had a share of these profits. He was succeeded by James Fowler, so obviously Robert had succeeded to James.

John Whyteby. (*Ibid.*) 50 years old, had no other living besides his prebend, and was granted a pension of 40*s.* per annum. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XIII, p. 81.) His connections with St. John's and probably his occupation of this prebend dated from before March, 1538, when he and Ralph Pole occur as beneficiaries under the will of Alexander Standish, clerk, who desired to be buried in the collegiate church. (*Ibid.*) In 1556, he was still in receipt of a pension of 60*s.* He was presented by the crown to 3rd Stall, Christ Church, 15 Sept., 1550; dead before 1 Oct., 1557. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 269.)

III. Perpetual Vicars of St. John's

Andrew Urkel, 1318. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.)

John de Tiddeswell, 1318. (*Ibid.*) 1322 (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 311) and 1323 (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 98).

Richard de Calf, 1318. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.)

William de Dunham, 1318. (*Ibid.*)

John Urkel, 1318 (*ibid.*) and 1323 (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 98).

John Ashbourne, 1318. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380.)

Richard de Stafford, 1318. (*Ibid.*)

William de Meer, ante 1345; later (1359–61) one of the prebendaries. (See above.)

Philip de Goderiche Castell, *priest.* 5 Jan., 1345, instituted to a vicar's stall in the choir in the patronage of Robert de Clipston, prebendary, in exchange with Meer for the vicarage of Sandbach. (*Ormerod, loc. cit.*)

Mr. John de Cristleton, July, 1352. (*Ibid.*) **Adam de Wigan.** Sacrist, July, 1352 (*ibid.*); also cantarist of the Blessed Mary. (See below.) **Walter de Baggele,** July, 1352. (*Ibid.*) **Robert de Cliderowe,** July, 1352 and 1357. (*Ibid.*) **Robert Brown,** July, 1352. (*Ibid.*)

Richard Ku of Chester, subdeacon (*ibid.*), instituted 26 Nov., 1359; he was still here in 1380 (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II., p. 184).

Geoffrey de Wicco. 25 March, 1368. Bishop granted office of penitentiary in the archdeaconry of Chester to Geoffrey de Wicco, vicar in the collegiate church of St. John. (*Ibid.,* vol. I, p. 42.) In the previous June, described as Geoffrey de Wico, chaplain, he was commissioned, with the vicar of Plemstall, to exercise the bishop's jurisdiction over the chapter during the vacancy of the deanery. (*Ibid.,* p. 115.)

John de Halghton occurs as sacristan 1374 and 96. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 311.) 1377–1402, rector of St. Peter's. As he does not occur as a vicar in 1380, he may have been a prebendary, or a cantarist.

Richard Filkoc, 1380. (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 184.)

Robert Hood, 1380. (*Ibid.*)

John More, 1380 (*ibid.*), and as proxy of rector of Christelton '80 (*ibid.,* p. 185).

William de Kyngesley. Ordained to all orders 1371, being already a vicar of St. John's. (*Ibid.,* vol. I, p. 253.) Occurs 1380 (*ibid.,* p. 184.), and probably still there 1403–4 (Harl. 2061, f. 3).

Richard de Madeley, Jan., 1381. (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 187.) He has been said to have been rector of St. Mary's in 1380, but he actually occurs in the bishop's register, under that year, as the proxy of the rector, and was perhaps a parochial chaplain there. (*Ibid.,* p. 185.) In 1380, he occurs as the proxy of Alan de Stokes, one of the prebendaries. (*Ibid.,* p. 184.) In 1391, he exchanged the church of Halkyn (Flint), St. Asaph dio., for that of St. Olaf, Chester, and held the latter until about 1393.

John de Sudbury, 1393. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 311.) Not vicar of St. Oswald, in 1380, as Helsby says (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 305), but occurs in that year as the vicar's proxy, which would explain the error (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 185).

Roger le Grey, Oct., 1414 (*Reg. Chichele,* vol. III, p. 345), and probably in 1402–3 (Harl. 2061, f. 3).

William de Tewkesbury, Oct., 1414 (*Reg. Chichele, loc. cit.*), and probably in 1407–8, when he occurs as feoffee of the fraternity of St. Anne (Harl. 2061, f. 7).

Thomas Wemme, Oct., 1414. (*Reg. Chichele, loc. cit.*)

Roger Clegge, Oct., 1414. (*Ibid.*)

Henry Torrot, Oct., 1414. (*Ibid.*)

Nicholas London (or Sondon), occurs as sacristan in April, 1430, and was probably at that date one of the vicars. (Lich. Reg., vol. IV, f. 120.)

Thomas Clyffe, April, 1430. (*Ibid.*)

Thomas Colly, April, 1430. (*Ibid.*)

Ranulf Mason, April, 1430. (*Ibid.*)

John Borton, April, 1430. (*Ibid.*) Not Saxton, as given in *Ormerod.*

Thomas Wemme, ante 1435. Perhaps son of the priest of the same name who was vicar in 1414.

Walter Heydok, who was a prebendary, 1427–38, held in conjunction with his prebend a vicar's stall, from some time before 1436 until his death in 1438.

Mr. Henry Medwall. In Jan., 1486, master of St. Giles. (B.M. Additional Charters, No. 72325.) He was dead before April, 1492, being described as notary public and formerly sacristan of the collegiate church of St. John. His executors were Sir William Stanley of Hooton and Robert Medwall. (Chester Pentice Rolls, No. 375.)

Richard Hamnet, 20 May, 1515, vicar-choral and one of the masters of obits of the vicars of St. John's. (Harl. 2099, f. 70.) Hamnet is a local name.

Thomas Bateman, at the same date, was sacristan and the other master of obits. (*Ibid.*) In 1492–3, and again three years later, he was bound over in the Mayor's Court to keep the peace to one Stokes, a shoemaker. (Chester Mayors' Books 1491–4, f. 27; 1494–1500, f. 26.)

Richard Sherman, occurs in 1518, when he received a legacy to celebrate for the soul of Nicholas Daykyn. (Daykyn's Will.) He is found as chaplain, as early as 1506, when he was a beneficiary under the will of Henry Raynford. He was still at St. John's in 1535. (*Valor,* vol. V, p. 202.)

William Wall, 1535. (*Ibid.*) He can hardly be identical with Dr. William Wall, the last warden of the Minorites with whom he has often been confused. (e.g. *Cheshire Sheaf,* First Series, vol. I, p. 55; Bennett's "The Grey Friars of Chester", *C.N.W.A.A.S.,* vol. XXIV, p. 51.) They were probably both related to the Walls of Helsby, several members of which family were citizens of Chester. (Robert Wall, baker, *Morris,* p. 263;

William Wall, ironmonger, *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVI, p. 64.) It was certainly the Franciscan and not the chaplain, who became a prebendary of the new cathedral. (Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 51.) In Oct., 1530, we find the latter acting as deputy of the archdeacon's official. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, First Series, vol. I, p. 55.) *Ormerod's* statement (vol. I, p. 308) that he was a canon appears erroneous.

Richard Ledsham, 1535. (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.) 1519, beneficiary under the will of William Rogerson; 1525–62, vicar of Neston. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 537.) In 1542, he occurs as the parochial chaplain of St. Bridget's, one of the city churches appropriated to St. John's. (List of Chester Clergy, 1542, in *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society*, *Publications*, vol. XXXIII.) March, 1525, he was one of three persons to whom the abbot of St. Werburgh granted the next presentation of the church of Waverton. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 114.) The name was a common one in Chester, and probably Ledsham himself was a native of the city. His name occurs frequently in the Mayor's Books, as being bound over to keep the peace.

Robert Grene, 1535. (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 202.) In 1538, he was a beneficiary under the will of Alexander Standish, a kinsman of the Pooles who was buried at St. John's. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XIII, p. 81.)

John Wilkynson, 1535. (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 203.)

John Repyngton, 1535. (*Ibid.*)

Hugh Johnson, 1535. (*Ibid.*)

Henry Whirsted, 1535. (*Ibid.*) Or Wyxsted.

Henry Hoghton, 1535. (*Ibid.*) Another beneficiary under Standish's will. Perhaps identical with Roger Hoghton, who was one of the vicars in 1548, and was then about 41 years old, and in possession of no other living. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314.) In 1556, Roger was in receipt of a pension of £5 13*s.* 4*d.* (*Ibid.*, p. 315.)

Robert Bower (or Boyer), 1535. (*Valor*, vol. V, p. 203.) He was retained as vicar of St. John's after the dissolution of the collegiate establishment (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314), being then 40 years old. By 1559–60, he had resigned, the vicar being then Thomas Alcocke, but he was still alive, apparently living in the "Ancren Chapel" in the churchyard. (Account of Receiver of Crown Revenues, in *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXV, p. 72.) He was clearly a native of Chester and of comparatively humble origin. He was bound over to keep the peace, in Sept., 1541, and one of his sureties is given as Randle Bower, shoemaker. (Chester Mayors' Book 1540–1, f. 27.)

Richard Crosse, 1548. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 314.) Then 26 years old, and possessing no other living.

Thomas Latwis, 1548. (*Ibid.*) Aged 51, and possessing no other living. He was retained as assistant chaplain to Bower. A kinsman, one Richard Latwis, was a barker in Chester, Jan., 1538. (Chester Mayors'

Books.) He was still "curate" at St. John's in 1559–60. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXV, p. 72.)

IV. Cantarists of the Chantry of the Blessed Mary

This chantry was actually served by two chaplains, but its endowments were the freehold of the senior chaplain. It was called the "petty canonry", and presentations to it occur in the episcopal registers. Unless otherwise stated, the following information is derived from *Ormerod*. (Vol. I, p. 312.)

Adam de Doncaster, *subdeacon*. Presented 8 Oct., 1307, by Sir John Orreby, kt. He is described as the son of William de Doncaster. The Doncasters were an old and substantial merchant family. (Adam's brother William was sheriff of Chester, 1312; mayor, 1316–19.) They held considerable properties in the city itself, in Wirral, and in North Wales. (See article by H. Taylor, in *C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. II, p. 155 *et seq.*)

Nicholas de Berddebrok, *priest*. Presented by Sir John Orreby, 14 May, 1309. Dead before Oct., 1316.

Andrew de Aston, *chaplain*. Presented by Sir John Orreby, 12 Oct., 1316, on death of Berddebroke. 1318, described as *porcionarius* of the said church. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, p. 380.) This probably means that he was still the petty canon at this date.

Hugh de Wybbunbury, ante Sept., 1349.

William Craa de Trusthorp, *chaplain*. Presented by Sir John Orreby, 15 Sept. 1349, on death of Wybbunbury, the last incumbent. Trusthorpe is in Lincolnshire, so it would not appear that Craa was a local man. He resigned Jan., 1352. 1361, archdeacon Sudbury. 1365 exchanged the archdeaconry of Suffolk for church of Sutton and Preb. Wells (*Le Neve*, Vol. II, 487, 491).

Adam de Wigan, *chaplain*. Presented by Sir John Orreby, 29 Jan., 1353. He occurs, in June, 1352, as one of the vicars choral and sacristan of St. John's, but his association with the collegiate church seems to go back farther, because, in Oct., 1349, he was presented by the chapter to the church of Stoke. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 389.) March, 1360, appointed by the bishop, as sacrist of the church of St. John, to the office of penitentiary for the deaneries of Chester, Wirral, Broxton, Frodsham, Nantwich, Middlewich and Macclesfield. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 11.) This appointment was renewed in April of the following year, about the time of his resignation from the chantry. (*Ibid.*, p. 94.)

According to the *Black Prince's Register* (vol. III, p. 438) it would seem that the prince presented one **Alexander Mareschal,** *chaplain*, to the chantry lately held by Adam de Wigan, in Feb., 1362; but his presentation of Budenhale occurs 18 March (*ibid.*, p. 440) with no further mention of Mareschal, who was never instituted or admitted.

Thomas de Budenhale, *priest*. Presented 6 April, 1362, by the prince of Wales, who exercised this right because of the minority of Joan, the daughter and heiress of John de Orreby. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 161.) 1368–96, rector of Rostherne. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 437.)

Alexander de Bayton, *priest.* Also presented by the prince of Wales, 28 April, 1370. Aug., 1377, exchanged for the vicarage of Audlem. (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 180.)

John de Munton. Instituted 25 Aug., 1377, " at the presentation of the king, patron for this turn by reason of the custody of the lands of Joan, daughter of John de Orreby deceased being in his hands ". (*Ibid.*) He was also rector of Kegydok, Asaph dio., and, in May, 1379, he exchanged both his livings with Turk, for the church of Langley Burrell, Wilts. (*Ibid.,* p. 182.) " Kegydok " is Llan St. Sior, Denbigh, about five miles N.W. of St. Asaph. (Cf. D. R. Thomas, *A History of the Diocese of St. Asaph,* p. 370.) Munton had made an exchange of chantries with **John Howell,** Dec., 1378 (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81,* p. 292), but this must have been disallowed for some reason which does not appear, and it seems improbable that Howell was ever in possession.

John Turk. Exchanged with Munton as above. He died, in Easter week, 1380, at the vicarage of Chewe, Somerset. (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 184.) Sometime preb. Lichfield. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, p. 615.)

Ranulf de Scolehall. Instituted 14 May, 1380. He was presented by the bishop of St. Asaph, Sir Hugh de Segrave, kt., and John de Fordham, clerk, executors of the Black Prince (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 183), but, on May 11th, the king presented **John de la Forde,** chaplain, " by reason of the custody of the land and heir of John de Orreby, tenant in chief of the late prince of Wales being in his hands ". (*Cal. Pat., 1377–81,* p. 488.) The bishop, therefore, ordered the archdeacon's official to hold an inquisition, and to institute Scholehall if everything was found to be in order. The jury said that the chantry was vacant by the death of Turk, that they did not know who had presented at the last turn, but that the said executors are the true patrons by reason of the manor of Fulk-Stapleford, to which the advowson pertains, being in their hands. Scholehall was free and legitimate, of good report and honest conversation, of full age and in priest's orders, and was rector of the church of Llandudno, Bangor dio. Scolehall was, therefore, duly instituted and we hear no more of Forde. (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. II, p. 183.) There was a prominent Chester family named Scolehall to which the cantarist was probably related. 1365, John de Scolehall was prince's yeoman and escheator of Chester. (*Black Prince's Register,* vol. III, p. 485.) Another John Scolehall was rector of Mobberley, *c.* 1416. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 428.) Ranulf seems to have been resident in Chester for many years. He occurs frequently as one of the wardens of the Fraternity of St. Anne, e.g., in 1396–7 (Harl. 2061, f. 22), 1409–10 (Harl. 2061, f. 25), 1410–11 (P.R.O. Chancery Inq. ad.q'd.d'n. file 441, No. 30), 1413–14 (Harl. 2131, f. 93), 1420–1 (Harl. 2061, f. 23). A convivial meeting of the brethren, at which the accounts for the year 1402–3 were presented, was held at his house in the week following the Assumption of the Virgin, 1403. (P.R.O. Sc. 11/890.) As these references cover such a long span of years, there must remain the possibility that there was an elder and a younger chaplain of the same name.

William Bealschawe de Aldurleye. Presented Jan., 1385, by Sir John Roos, patron *hac vice.* An inquisition revealed that the chantry became vacant on 8 Jan. by the resignation of the last incumbent, at Valle Crucis abbey. This incumbent's name is given as Bealschawe in the register,

presumably a clerical error for Scolehall. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, pp. 191–2.) Bealschawe died before March, 1390.[1]

Ranulf de Scolehall. Again presented, this time by Sir John Roos, 19 March, 1390. He was dead before 28 Aug., 1424, when **William Predyn,** *chaplain*, was presented by John le Bruyn esq., "*ex concessione Johannis Stretely et Alicie, uxoris sue*". He died in Dec., 1427. He was rector of Gawsworth, 1396–1424. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 555.)

Richard Spycer, *chaplain*, presented 3 Dec., 1427, by John Stretely of Creslow, Bucks. A man of this name occurs as a citizen of Chester, 1416. (C.R.R., 3 & 4 Hen. V, m. 5d(2) in *Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 662.) Spycer occurs as " chaplain of St. Mary ", in an inquisition held at St. John's, April, 1430. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 120.)

Mr. Thomas Wemme, *priest.* 13 June, 1435, dispensation to him, who was formerly dispensed, by papal authority, as the son of a priest and an unmarried woman, to be promoted to Holy Orders, and, secondly, to hold another living together with a certain perpetual vicarage in the church of St. John, Chester, in virtue of which he obtained the parish church of Waverton, which he has since resigned together with the said perpetual vicarage. He has now obtained a perpetual benefice, called a chantry, in the collegiate church of St. John, which is without cure. (*Papal Letters*, vol. VIII, p. 539.) Rector St. Olaf, 1435–44. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 345.) He (or perhaps his father?) occurs as a vicar of St. John's, 1414. (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. III, p. 345.) He died in May, 1446.

Hugh Overscroft, *priest*, presented 12 May, 1446, by John Troutbeck, esq.; died before 25 Sept., 1458. He had been already resident in the neighbourhood for some years, perhaps as a vicar-choral. He occurs on a number of occasions, between 1433–44, as feoffee of John del Dedwode, for certain of the latter's properties in Chester, notably in Castle Lane. (Harl. 2063, ff. 107 and 92; quoted *Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXII, p. 69; Portmoot Roll, No. 85.) The Dedwood family were of considerable note in the city. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXII, p. 65.) John Dedwood was mayor in 1468, and a younger John was sheriff, 1481, and mayor, 1483. The Dedwoods had business associations with Troutbeck, who also possessed a " mansion " and considerable property in the neighbourhood of St. Mary's church. (*Ibid.*, p. 69.)

Richard Waterford, *chaplain*, presented 25 Sept., 1458, by William Brereton, of Brereton, esq.; died before 27 Oct., 1474.

Robert Brereton, *priest*, presented by Sir William Brereton, whose kinsman he doubtless was, 27 Oct., 1474. He resigned, Oct., 1477. He was also rector of the family living of Brereton, 1459–84. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 94.)

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[1] Bealschawe, sometime rector of Baxterley, Warwickshire, and then of Audley, Staffordshire, of which latter place he was presumably a native. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 53.) In 1381 he exchanged Audley with Scolehall for Llandudno. (*Ibid.*, p. 150). One may at this point suspect some confusion in the records.

John Bett (or Becc), *chaplain* (Helsby gives Bell, but this is certainly erroneous), presented by Sir William Brereton, 21 Oct., 1477, and died before 9 Oct., 1478, when

Robert Cliffe, *priest,* was presented by Sir William Brereton. Died before 14 Oct., 1516, when

Richard Manley was presented by Richard Grosvenor, Nicholas Manley, Ranulf Brereton of Chester, and Edward Dood de Egge, patrons, "*pro hac vice*", by grant of Sir William Brereton. This Nicholas Manley was, doubtless, Nicholas Manley, gent. of Poulton, mentioned by *Ormerod* as holding lands there in 1506. His family was a younger branch of the Manleys of Manley, near Frodsham. (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 106.) Dead before 31 April, 1526, when Sir William Brereton presented

Mr. Peter Brereton; occurs as rector of Heswall, 1533 and 1535 (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 515; *Valor,* vol. V, p. 213); in 1535, as prebendary of Creswall, in the collegiate church of the Blessed Mary of Stafford (*ibid.,* vol. III, p. 119), and, in 1537, as vicar of Oswestry (Thomas, *op. cit.,* p. 655). Occurs as king's chaplain. (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII,* Addenda, vol. I, pt. II, p. 478.) About the beginning of 1539 (*ibid.*), he complained to the Court of Requests that the sum of £3 per annum was being wrongfully withheld from him by the dean and chapter. But the dean had the support of the bishop, who, in his turn, had the support of Cromwell, so that it is most unlikely that the Court's order to the dean and chapter (*ibid.*) to do right to Brereton was of much benefit to him. (*Cheshire Sheaf,* Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 27.) Brereton may have been the fifth son of Sir Randle Brereton of Shocklach and Malpas, and so a brother of that John Brereton who was rector of St. Mary's on the Hill, 1534–42. (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 687.)

V. Rectors of St. Peter's. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 326)

Robert de Macklesfeld, *clerk*; presented by the abbot, June, 1300. He was dead before Oct., 1311.

Guido de Neuton, *subdeacon*; presented by the abbot, Oct., 1311; resigned 6 Feb., 1313/14. Admitted, Jan., 1314, to the church of Coddington at the presentation of the abbot, being still a subdeacon at that date. (Lich. Reg., vol. I, f. 59.) He obtained a licence to study in Sept., 1314. (*Ibid.,* f. 61.) Rector of St. Mary's on the Hill, from 1328 until death, 1342.

Roger de Chyn, *priest*; presented by the abbot, 6 Feb., 1313/14; dead before Aug., 1320.

Jordan de Marthale, *priest*; presented by the abbot 9 Aug., 1320; rector of St. Olaf, 1319–23 (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 345); was still alive and in possession of this living in 1339. He was probably a relative of John Marcell, canon of St. John's, 1307, archdeacon of Chester, 1314–21. Can they be identical?

Robert de Byngton, *clerk.* Presented by the abbot, 31 July, 1349, on the death of the previous incumbent. (Probably Marthale, but called "Dominus Roger", in the register.) He had died or resigned before the following June.

Robert de Bredon, *chaplain*; presented by the abbot, 29 June, 1350; dead before 24 Sept., 1377. Although his origin is obscured by a surprising confusion of the records, he undoubtedly sprang from a family of the lesser landowning gentry of the neighbourhood, and himself owned considerable properties in the city. In 1393, occurs a reference to John, son of Richard de Astor, as kinsman and heir to Robert. (*Morris*, p. 105.) Elsewhere, the name of his heir occurs as Thomas Assheby de Lowesby (Portmoot Roll, No. 88) and John de Assheton. (Aston Deeds 76a, *Cheshire Sheaf*, New Series, vol. IV, p. 30.) It has been suggested that he may have been related to the Ashton family of Ashton-on-Mersey, another member of which, William de Assheton, became warden of St. John's without the Northgate in 1392. (*Ibid.*) He owned property in Fleshmonger Lane (Portmoot Roll, No. 88), besides divers other lands and tenements, which he appears to have bequeathed in reversion to the fabric fund of his church, and which were sold by the parishioners for £10 of silver in 1415. (Aston Deeds, 76a.) He was a generous benefactor of charitable foundations. In 1361, he granted, to the Fraternity of St. Anne, properties valued at about £10. (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 409.) In 1365, he occurs as one of four persons, who granted 11 messuages, 2 shops, a fourth part of a seld, and 6*d*. rent of assize to the hospital of St. John. (*Ibid.*, p. 486.) All these properties may not have belonged to him in the first instance, and the notices may testify not so much to his personal affluence as to his activity in raising funds for good causes.

It is clear that he enjoyed considerable prominence in the city. In 1347, he was one of a group of persons who secured from the prince of Wales a three years' lease of the proverbially lucrative Dee Mills. (*Morris*. p. 104.) He is found again as one of the farmers, in 1355 (*ibid.*) and in 1374. (Simpson, *St. Peter's*, p. 70.) He acted as feoffee to uses of various properties in the city. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXIX, p. 54. Barker, *Talbot Deeds*, p. 31.) He was one of the executors of Bartholomew de Northworthyn, mayor of Chester, who was slain, 1349–50. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXVIII, p. 62.) In Feb., 1362, he was appointed penitentiary for the town of Chester (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 100), and he was licensed by the bishop, June, 1365, to set up an oratory in his own house (*ibid.*, p. 24).

John de Halghton, *priest*, presented by the abbot, 24 Sept., 1377. He had died or resigned before 6 Sept., 1402. Sacristan of St. John's, 1374–*c*. 1396, and perhaps also a canon. (See above.) He, too, occurs as feoffee of certain properties in Chester. (Harl. 2099, f. 89.)

Dom. John Crissenale; collated by the bishop, 6 Sept., 1402, "*pro lapsu tremestris*", but seems never to have obtained possession. He complained, to the archbishop of Canterbury, that although he was lawfully presented by the prince of Wales [*sic*] and properly instituted, he had been ousted by the intrusion of John Leyot, priest, who had no right in the said church, nor had been instituted nor admitted. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 426.)

Mr. John Leyot, *priest*; presented by the abbot, before Dec., 1402 (*C.P.L.*, vol. V, p. 525); still rector, July, 1405 (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 19). Probably identical with John Leyot, the younger, canon and prebendary of St. John's, 1420–7. (See above.) If this identification is correct, he was dead before 25 Feb., 1427.

John Gully; occurs as rector, April, 1430. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 120.)

Mr. Henry Hey, B.C.L.; obtained a papal dispensation, 10 March, 1431, to hold another living together with St. Peter's. (*C.P.L.*, vol. VIII, p. 385.) He was presented to the rectory of West Kirby, 26 April, 1434, and held both livings until his death, before 19 March, 1443–4. (Brownbill, *West Kirby*, p. 108.) He was " of a race of barons " (*C.P.L., loc. cit.*), and a kinsman, John del Hey, is described as " of Chester ". (C.R.R., 11 & 12 Hen. VI, m 2(9) in. *Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 361.)

Mr. Roger Asser, I.U.B., *priest,* presented by the abbot, 19 March, 1443–4; exchanged, with James Stanley, for the rectory of St. Mary on the Hill, 16 Sept., 1464. 1438, rector of Denbigh. 1444–71, dean of St. John's. (See above.)

James Stanley, exchanged with Asser as above; resigned to become rector of Hawarden, 26 May, 1466. Rector of Hawarden, 1466–78, the patron being Thomas, Lord Stanley. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 326; Lich. Reg., vol. XII, ff. 103, 112.) The 4th son of Thomas, 1st Baron Stanley, he obtained, in Oct., 1458, a papal dispensation to obtain two incompatible livings as soon as he reached the age of eighteen. (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 372.[1]) His preferments included rectory of Winwick, 1462–85, also in his father's gift (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, ff. 100 & 120), archdeaconry of Chester, 1478–85 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, p. 567), wardenship of St. Mary's college, Manchester, 1481–5, and prebends of St. Paul's and Southwell. He died in 1485 or 6. (Articles in *D.N.B.* on Thos. Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby, and James Stanley, Bishop of Ely.)

Thomas Bolton, *chaplain*; presented by the abbot, 26 May, 1466. 1472–4, rector of St. Michael, Cornhill. (Newcourt, *Repertorium*, vol. I, p. 482.) 1474–7, rector of West Kirby. (Brownbill, *op. cit.*, p. 109.) 1477–1505, rector of North Meols, Lancashire. (*V.C.H. Lancs.*, vol. III, p. 228.) Vicar of Preston, 1482–1515; died 1516; perhaps the son of Mathew and Margaret Bolton of Preston. (Brownbill, *loc. cit.*) He was still rector of St. Peters in 1477. (*Ibid.*)

Dom. William Pellyn, died in possession of this living before 25 July, 1501. The name is a Welsh one, but several references occur to persons holding it, who were resident in Chester, and who appear to have been connections of the rector. 13 Hen. VII, William and Henry Pellyn, cappers, were indicted as " foreigners ", for practising their trade within the franchises of the city. (Chester Customs Entry Book.) The name of Thomas Pyllyn occurs, 1534, as liable for a gable rent of 12*d.*, for certain lands, within the walls on the south side of the East Gate. (Chester Assembly Book.) The date of this rector's ordination does not appear, and, if he was Bolton's immediate successor, his christian name is also in doubt. It is given as William in the episcopal register at Lichfield, but on Monday, next after the feast of the purification, 2 Hen. VII, Hugh Pillun was bound over in the mayor's court to keep the peace towards one John Barker, a saddler (Chester Mayor's Book, 1487–94, f. 14), and was then described as rector of St. Peter's. Hugh Pillun, who may of course have been succeeded at St. Peter's by a relative named William, seems to have been a rather notorious character in

[1] The father is here described as " a powerful baron, James Stanlei, high chamberlain of [the] king of England ", but this is clearly a clerical error for Thomas.

Chester, in the latter years of Edward IV's reign. He was bound over to keep the peace with scandalous frequency. He pursued quarrels with half a dozen or more of the citizens, but seems to have regarded with particular spleen a certain chaplain named Thomas Bond, for this man was driven, time and again, by Hugh's violent demeanour towards him, to seek the protection of the city courts. (e.g. Mayor's Books, 16 Ed. IV, f. 12; 12 Ed. IV, f. 8.)

Mr. Robert Bekynshaw, *bachelor of theology*; presented by Abbot John Birchenshaw, whose kinsman he doubtless was, 25 July, 1501. He resigned before 13 March, 1505. 1508, master of Queen's college, Cambridge. (*Le Neve*, vol. III, p. 685.) Treasurer of Lincoln cathedral, 1512–13 (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 90); almost certainly an absentee rector.

John Nicholson, presented by the abbot, 13 March, 1505; died 15 May, 1511.

Thomas Baxter, presented by the abbot, 13 Aug., 1511, and was dead before March 8, 1537. One interesting evidence of this rector survives:— his will, dated 4 June, 1536. (*Piccope*, vol. III, p. 45.) He desired to be buried before the high altar of St. Peter's, and left £10 towards the building of the uvilys [*sic*], £6 13*s.* 4*d.* to the hospital of St. Ursula, 16*d.* to each of the paupers there; 3*s.* 4*d.* to each house of friars; 6*s.* 8*d.* each to the fabric of St. John's and St. Bride's, numerous small personal bequests, mostly to other priests; reference to a kinswoman living in Oswald Street. The divers lands and tenements held in Chester by his late father to be disposed of by his executors, in accordance with the terms of his father's will. His interest in St. Ursula's, and the fact that Sir Thomas Smith was one of his executors, suggest that he was related in some way to the prominent Smith family.

John Beddo, presented by the bishop, "*pro lapsu tremestris*", 8 March, 1536–7; resigned before 16 Aug., 1538. Possibly identical with John Baddy, or Baddo, who was parochial chaplain of St. Mary in 1499. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 92. Pentice Roll, No. 430.)

William Willson, *chaplain*, presented by the abbot, 16 Aug., 1538; dead before 15 May, 1541.

Randle Cotgreve, *chaplain*, presented, 15 May, 1541, by Roger Brereton, esq., William Cotgreve, junior, of Cristleton, and Nicholas Newbold of Doddleston, yeoman, patrons, "hac vice", by grant of the abbot and convent of the late dissolved monastery. The obvious inference is that he was a kinsman of William Cotgreve, but the name was long a very common one in this district, and it is not unlikely that he was also connected to several of the prominent citizens who bore it. John Cotgreve, draper, for example, was a member of the common council in the year of his induction. (Mayor's Book.)

VI. Rectors of Holy Trinity. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 330)

Alexander le Bel is the earliest rector of whom there is any extant notice. He was certainly rector in 1318 (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 380) and died in possession before 18 May, 1328. He was a family connection of Sir

John Arneway, his mother Agnes taking one of the Arneways, as her second husband. (Harl. 2071, f. 76(h).)

Robert de Swynnerton is said by Helsby to have been presented, 16 June, 1325, but unless Bel left and returned this must be an error. Probably identical with Robert de Swynnerton, rector of Barrow, 1335–47 (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 341), a living in the patronage of Sir Roger de Swynnerton, the lord of the manor of Swinnerton. The presentation of this, and the preceding, rector are not to be found in the Lichfield registers.

Robert de Watteford, *clerk*; presented by Lord Robert de Montalt, 1328, on the death of Le Bel. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 104.) Exchanged for the church of Dunsfold, Surrey, 16 May, 1345. In Sept., 1343, he was provided to a canonry of Chichester, notwithstanding that he had the church of Holy Trinity, Chester, worth £6 13*s.* 4*d.*, on the petition of Robert de Ufford, earl of Suffolk, whose clerk he then was. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 132; *Papal Petitions*, p. 74.) Suffolk was one of the most trusted counsellors of Edward III. July–Nov., 1343, he was joint ambassador to Clement VI, at Avignon. (*D.N.B.*) Probably Watteford was with him. He may also be identical with a king's clerk, of the same name (*Cal. Pat., 1338–40*, p. 115), who was presented by the king to the church of Bledlow, Bucks., in June, 1338. (*Cal. Pat., 1338–40*, p. 85.) Appointed to the office of opposer of the sheriffs' foreign summonses in the exchequer, April, 1340 (*Cal. Pat., 1338–40*, p. 470), and as one of the surveyors of weights and measures in the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon, in Feb., 1343. (*Cal. Pat., 1343–5*, p. 72.)

William de Cestrie, exchanged with Watteford as above. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 118.) Clearly the return of the native; died before 18 Nov., 1349.

John de Purston, *accolyte*, presented 18 Nov., 1349, by Queen Isabella (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 125); died before 28 Aug., 1369.

Mr. Richard de Penkerych, *priest*, presented 28 Aug., 1369, by the earl of Salisbury; exchanged to church of Fenny Compton, Warwickshire, 4 Oct., 1378. Presented, by the king, to the church of Iffley, Oxfordshire, March, 1368. (*Cal. Pat., 1367–70*, p. 93.) A noted schoolmaster of this name is mentioned by Trevisa in his translation of *Polychronicon* (vol. II, p. 157), in the well-known passage where he refers to the substitution of English for French in the teaching of grammar. Could this be he?

John de Midelton, *priest*, exchanged with Penkerych, as above; here until his death before 31 March, 1384. Not possible to trace his career because the name is such a common one. Perhaps identical with John de Midulton of Chester, "a poor clerk", who petitioned the pope, in 1363, for a benefice in the gift of the bishop of Lichfield. (*Papal Petitions*, p. 430.) He may have been non-resident, as he was represented by a proxy, John de Stretton, at an inquisition held in St. John's on Saturday, the feast of St. Faith the Virgin, 1380. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 185.) This accounts for the appearance of Stretton's name in Helsby's list of rectors. Stretton was perhaps the parochial chaplain.

John Eston, *clerk*, presented, 31 March, 1384, by the earl of Salisbury. Nov., 1385, exchanged for North Bovey, Exeter dio., with John de Lichfield. (Exeter Episcopal Register, quoted by Stewart-Brown, in *Cheshire*

Sheaf, Third Series, vol. XXIV, p. 17.) He was, presumably, in minor orders at the time of his presentation, because, in the following June, he obtained from the bishop letters dimissory to all orders. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 87.) He exchanged North Bovey for Arreton, Isle of Wight, in Nov., 1389 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 127), and was presented, Jan., 1391, to the church of Old Romney (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 289) and, in Dec., 1397, to Kettering (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 273). In Oct., 1400, as king's clerk, granted a prebend of Dublin. (*Cal. Pat., 1399–1401*, p. 369.) 1406–22, canon of Windsor. (*Le Neve*, vol. III, p. 383.)

John de Lichefeld, exchanged with Eston, as above; died in 1396.

Nicholas Baxter, *priest*; presented, in 1396, by earl of Salisbury. Exchanged, 25 Feb., 1402, for the church of Prees.

John de Erdyston, exchanged with Baxter as above (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 87), dead before 8 Jan., 1405; vicar of Prees, Shropshire, 1387 (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 298). Oct., 1386, pardoned of outlawry for debt. (*Ibid.*, p. 183.)

William de Newhagh, *chaplain*, presented by Sir John Stanley (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, p. 93), 8 Jan., 1405; exchanged for the rectory of Tilston, 8 May, 1412. Rector of Burton, and master of the hospital of Denwall, 1422–4. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 543.) He was probably not a graduate, and is therefore not to be identified with his namesake, the canon of St. John's.

Robert Strafford, *chaplain*, exchanged with Newhagh, as above. 2 May, 1405, presented to the church of Tilston, Cheshire, by Sir Wm. Brereton of Brereton. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, f. 94.) May, 1428, presented to the church of Sprowston, Norwich dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1422–9*, p. 489.)

Robert Halstede had been rector of Greenford, Middlesex, 1409–10 (*Hennessey*, p. 174), and rector of Aldford, 1410–14. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 759.) He had obtained this living, before July, 1414 (*C.P.L.*, vol. VI, p. 352), when he was licensed to hold another (*ibid.*, p. 505). In Aug., of the same year, he obtained a papal indult to farm his benefices for seven years whilst studying at an university. (*Ibid.*, p. 484.) In June, 1421, he was pardoned of outlawry for debt, the sum involved being £10. (*Cal. Pat., 1416–22*, p. 347.) He is here described as late parson of Holy Trinity, Chester, but, in Oct., 1426, exchanged for the church of Headley, Winchester dio. (in Hampshire).

Robert Brown de Hedley, exchanged with Halstede, 22 Oct., 1426; resigned, 20 May, 1427.

John Mynes, *priest*, presented by Sir John Stanley, 20 May, 1427; died before 7 June, 1450. He resigned from the vicarage of Mold, July, 1433. (*Cal. Pat., 1429–36*, p. 285.) In July, 1439, he made a violent assault on a citizen named Barker. (Harl. 2020, f. 390.)

Thomas Bovell, *chaplain*, presented by Sir Thos. Stanley, 7 June, 1450; dead before 16 March, 1455. He was a former vicar of Childwall. (Lich. Reg., vol. X, f. 38.)

Edward Massy, presented by Sir Thos. Stanley, 16 March, 1454–5; resigned, 26 June, 1463; canon of St. John's 1462–6, rector of Eccleston at time of death, 1466. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 103.)

John Crosse, *priest,* presented by Thos., Lord Stanley, 26 June, 1463, resigned 25 Nov., 1468.

Roger Cotyngham, *clerk,* presented by Thos., Lord Stanley, 25 Nov., 1468; died before 7 March, 1482.

Henry Rayneforthe, LL.B., *clerk,* presented by Thos., Lord Stanley, 7 March, 1482. Died before 1 Aug., 1505. His name is more commonly spelt as Rayneforde. Vicar of St. Oswald, 1493–6 (see below); rector of a moiety of Malpas, until 14 Dec., 1499 (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 607). He was presented by Arthur, prince of Wales, to a prebend in St. John's, 1496, but seems never to have obtained possession (see above). March, 1491, he was present at St. Mary's at the election of a new prioress, and was then styled " bachelor of decrees ". (Reg. Morton, f. 57.) In April, 1491, he obtained a dispensation from the custodian of the see of Lichfield (which was then vacant) to go to a university for three years to study arts, theology or law and to retain his benefice, providing that suitable arrangements were made for the cure of souls in his absence. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, f. 121.) In 1503, he occurs as executor of the will of Johanna, widow of Richard Reynforde of Chester, who was, quite probably, his mother. (Chester Pentice Roll, No. 441.) His will is dated 14 May, 1505. (P.C.C. 14 Adeane, quoted *Cheshire Sheaf,* Third Series, vol. XVIII, p. 93). Besides numerous pious and personal bequests, it includes references to Sir Hugh Rayneforde priest and " my cousin, William Huxley ". It is clear from the size of his library and from the number of bequests, that he was a man of considerable substance. Richard Rayneforde, probably his father, was sheriff of Chester, 1451, and mayor, 1465. (Also see above page 29.)

Richard Smythe, *chaplain*; presented by the earl of Derby, 1 Aug., 1505; resigned 19 Oct., 1507.

Mr. Robert Canlyn, LL.D.; presented by earl of Derby, 19 Oct., 1507. He was dead before 21 Jan., 1513. Vicar of St. Oswald, 1496–1513 (see below); perpetual vicar of Acton, 1508–12 (*Ormerod,* vol. III, p. 347). In 1511, he was commissioned by the bishop to deal with certain heretics at Coventry. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 99.)

Mr. Thomas Poinell; presented by the earl of Derby, 1 Feb., 1513; resigned 18 Oct., 1536. Canon of Lichfield and prebendary of the prebend of Bishopshill there, 1542–51; died in the latter year. (Lich. Reg., vol. XIV, ff. 45, 49.)

Mr. Thomas Bradshawe, *bachelor of decrees,* presented by earl of Derby, 18 Oct., 1536; resigned in March, 1552. In 1535, occurs as vicar of Godshill, Hants., and of North Stoke, Oxfordshire. (*Valor,* vol. II, pp. 25, 166.)

VII. Rectors of St. Mary on the Hill

Based on the list and notes in Earwaker, *St. Mary's*, p. 77 *et seq.*

Dom. Robert de Clipston ; presented by the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, 29 April, 1314 ; also canon of St. John's, etc. (See above.)

Richard de Bury ; presented by the king, as earl of Chester, 15 Jan., 1324–5, by reason of the temporalities of the abbey being in his hands. The future bishop of Durham and chancellor. At this time, he was chamberlain of Chester, having been appointed in 1321. He resigned from this living Dec., 1327. He was educated at Oxford and was a son of Sir Richard Aungerville. (*D.N.B.*)

Alan de Retford, *clericus* ; presented by the abbot and convent, 26 Dec., 1327 ; resigned, July, 1335. June, 1331, provided to a prebend of Chichester, at the request of the king whose clerk he then was, notwithstanding his possession of this living. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 330.) Perhaps he was employed, at this time, in the administration of the earldom of Chester, but he had entered the service of Queen Isabella by Nov., 1332, when he was provided, at her request, to a canonry and prebend of Salisbury. (*C.P.L.*, vol. II, p. 386.) It was again at her request that he was provided, Nov. 1334, to the church of Oxborough, Norfolk. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 12.) In Sept., 1351, described as Queen-Isabella's secretary, he was provided to a canonry of Wells, notwithstanding his possession of Oxborough, and a prebend of Salisbury. (*C.P.L.*, vol. III, p. 418.)

Thomas de Capenhurst, *clericus* ; presented by the abbot and convent, 23 July, 1335 ; resigned, Sept., 1338. May, 1333, appointment of T.C., king's clerk, to be present at the next county court to be held at Chester, to supervise the proceedings and to certify the king thereof. (*Cal. Pat., 1330–4*, p. 432.) In April, 1334, he held a prebend in the cathedral of St. Asaph and the perpetual vicarage of Llanarman, Denbigh, in the patronage of the bishop of St. Asaph. (*Cal. Pat., 1334–8*, p. 194.) In Oct., 1334 (*ibid.*, p. 39), he was one of the commissioners for the collection of the tenth and fifteenth in Lancashire.

Guy de Newton, *priest* ; presented by the abbot and convent, 4 Sept., 1338 ; died before 26 Sept., 1342. 1311–13, rector of St. Peter's ; 1337, rector of Coddington.

Thomas de Byvynton, *clerk* ; presented by abbot and convent, 26 Sept., 1342 ; exchanged for the rectory of Astbury, 26 Oct., 1343. 1343-68, rector of Astbury, called deacon at time of exchange. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 26.) Earwaker also says that he was at one time rector of Thurstaston.

Richard de Oclegh, *priest* ; exchanged with Byvynton, as above. He had been presented to the church of Astbury by the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, Sept., 1336. He occurs as rector of St. Mary's, Sept., 1347.

Note.—The history of this church in the latter half of the fourteenth century is very difficult to trace, owing, it would seem, to the uncertainty and litigation which resulted from one or more attempts by the abbot and convent to appropriate the living. The Black Prince granted them a licence,

to appropriate St. Mary's and the church of Astbury, in May, 1354 (*Black Prince's Register*, vol. III, p. 161), but the bishop appears to have withheld consent. (*Ibid.*, p. 203.) In July, 1396, the king ratified the appropriation of St. Mary's, on condition that competent portions were assigned for the maintenance of the vicars, and a sufficient sum yearly distributed among the poor parishioners (*Cal. Pat., 1396–9*, p. 9), i.e. the usual conditions of the ordination of a vicarage in this period. Only three days later, however, a pardon was issued to Henry de Sutton, abbot of Chester, for appropriating the churches of Astbury and St. Mary, under colour of certain bulls fabricated by him at Chester in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth years of the reign. (1392, 3 and 4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.) It may well be that the church was actually appropriated only during these years, but the matter must remain in doubt. The wording of the ratification of 1396 certainly implies that the church had been appropriated since 1354, and there is a brief cross reference, in Harl. 7568 (f. 193), to the fact that the church was farmed by the abbot for five years in 1377. On the other hand, the incumbents during these years are invariably styled rectors in the episcopal registers and the writer has not found a single instance of their being called " vicar ". The appropriation was revoked 21 Dec., 1402. (Lich. Reg., vol. VII, p. 89.) Besides these doubts the actual succession of incumbents is most confused.

Mr. Walter de Chilterne was ratified by the king as parson of St. Mary's, Feb., 1361, and died, 24 Sept., following; canon of St. John's, chancellor of the bishop of Lichfield, etc. (See above.)

John Squier, instituted, 15 Nov., 1361, at the presentation of the abbot and convent. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 159.) Earwaker is in error in giving this date as 1363. He is usually called John Squier of Seynesbury, and was doubtless a kinsman of the then abbot, Richard de Seynesbury. He was ordained subdeacon, in April, and deacon in September, 1362. (*Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 173, 178.)

John de Sheynton, dispensed by the bishop, 13 March, 1362, as rector of St. Mary, to leave his church for one year for purposes of study. He must be identical with Squier. Squier occurs, again, as rector in Oct., 1370, when the bishop set up a commission to investigate a charge of homicide which had been brought against him. (*Ibid.*, p. 139.) In Jan., 1373, he was pardoned for sueing abroad certain matters which pertained to the king's court. (*Cal. Pat.*, 1370–4, p. 236.) Probably his right to possession of St. Mary's had already been challenged.

John de Altcar had ousted Squier before 31 Jan., 1381, when he occurs as rector (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 187); occurs again, March, 1384 (*Reg. Gilbert*, p. 56). Curiously, he was presented by the king to St. Mary's, Sept., 1386. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9*, p. 211.) In April, 1388, the king had heard that certain persons were sueing in courts christian to thrust him out, and issued a prohibition to disturb him to all ecclesiastical persons whatsoever. (*Cal. Clos., 1385–9*, p. 395.) But, Oct., 1389 (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 124), revocation, giving effect to a decision in chancery, by the advice of the justices and other skilled persons of the council, of letters patent presenting John Altecar to the church of St. Mary on the Hill, Chester, obtained by him in fraud of John Squier of Seynesbury; it being found after divers proceedings before Hugh Burwell, supplying the place of the justice of Chester, and before the king in chancery . . . that Richard de

Seynesbury, late abbot of Chester . . . presented John Squier, on death of Walter de Chilterne and did not as Altcar alleges, before institution of the said Squier, who alleges he has had three [*sic*] years' possession, alienate the advowson to one Mr. John de Brunham the younger. John Altcar occurs as public and apostolic notary, June, 1379. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. I, p. 138.)

John Squier thus reinstated. Ratified as parson of St. Mary, June, 1392. (*Cal. Pat., 1391–6*, p. 63.) He occurs, in Sept., 1391, as prebendary of Lawrence Weston in the collegiate church of Westbury, Gloucester. (*Cal. Pat., 1388–92*, p. 476.) Earwaker says that he was retired on a pension of 20 marks per annum in 1403, and continued to draw it until Jan., 1413. This statement seems hardly compatible, however, with that given above of the appropriation of the church. Most probably Squier was actually retired in 1393 or 1396 (whenever the appropriation was effected).

John de Wylaston, *chaplain*, presented by abbot and convent, 1 May, 1403 ; died 7 April, 1430. Seems to have been well known in Chester, as his name occurs frequently in Recognizance Rolls, 1405–23. There was formerly a memorial window to this rector in the church. (Harl. 2151, f. 15.)

Humphrey Rodley, *clerk*, presented, 9 April, 1430, by Sir William de Athurston, kt., but an inquisition held in St. John's, by mandate of the vicar-general of the diocese (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 120), established that the abbot had granted the next presentation to Wm. Troutbeck, esq.

Richard Pensell, *priest*, presented . . . April by Troutbeck, therefore obtained possession. *Morris* (p. 132) says that he was formerly a monk of St. Werburgh's, but this is certainly an error. He was ordained priest, in 1414, to the title of the nuns of Chester. (*Reg. Chichele*, vol. III, p. 328.) 1431, occurs as feoffee of the manor of Budworth le Frith to the use of William Troutbeck. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XXII, p. 69.) He was probably a kinsman of Troutbeck. There was formerly in the church, " in a window at the north side of the communion table by the vestry door these coates, Hulse, Warburton, Troutbeck, Rixton ; at the bottome of the said window this writing, ' Orate pro anima Ricardi Pencell, quondam rectoris huius ecclesie ' ". (Harl. 2151, f. 15.) He was dead before May, 1458.

James Stanley, *clerk*, presented by the abbot and convent, 17 May, 1458 ; exchanged for St. Peter's, 1464. (See above.)

Mr. Roger Asser, exchanged with Stanley, 16 Sept., 1464. He was also dean of St. John's, 1444–71. (See above.)

Henry Smyth, *chaplain*, presented by the abbot and convent, 10 July, 1471 ; dead before 2 Jan., 1499 ; was certainly resident in Chester, as his name occurs frequently in the municipal records.

Mr. John Veysy, LL.D., presented by the abbot and convent, 2 Jan., 1499 ; exchanged, 4 Aug., 1506, for the prebend of Alton Boriall in the cathedral church of Salisbury. In Jan., 1505, he was presented by the king to the church of Stoke in Teignhead, Exeter dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1494–1509*, p. 397.) Besides a number of other preferments, he was vicar-general and chancellor of the bishop of Lichfield, 1498–1502, and archdeacon of Chester, 1499–1515. Bishop of Exeter, 1515–51. He was born in 1465, the son of

William Harmon of More Hall, Sutton Coldfield. He was a zealous supporter of the Henrician revolution, and one of the bishops who consecrated Cranmer. (*D.N.B.*)

Mr. James Straitbarell, *chaplain,* exchanged with Veysy as above. He probably belonged to a local family, as one Thomas Straitbarell was an assistant priest at St. Mary's in 1542. (*Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications,* vol. XXXIII.) Dead before May, 1523.

Mr. Maurice Birchinshaw, LL.B., presented by the abbot and convent, 15 May, 1523 (Lich. Reg., vol. XIII, pt. II, f. 102); resigned, March, 1528. Another example of nepotism on the part of Abbot Birchenshaw. (See Robert Birchenshaw, rector of St. Peter's.) 1528, presented to the rectory of Flamstead, Lincoln dio. (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII,* vol. IV, part II, p. 1774.) 1535, rector of Berryn-Arbor, Devon. (Clear annual value £34 15*s*. *Valor,* vol. II, p. 339.) 1538, prebendary St. Asaph. 1543, rector of Denbigh. Sometime canon of Wells. (Thomas, *History of St. Asaph,* p. 246.)

Mr. John Davenport, M.A., presented by abbot and convent, 9 March, 1528; dead before 11 May, 1534. Already well known in Chester. Sept., 1506, appointed one of the executors of the will of Roger Smith, under which St. Ursula's hospital was founded. He was the recipient of small bequests under the wills of William Rogers (1519) and Margaret Hawarden (1521). The window, erected to his memory in the church, incorporated the arms of Davenport, Devias and Bostok. (Harl. 2151, f. 15.)

Mr. John Brereton, LL.D., presented by the abbot and convent, 11 May, 1534; dead before Nov., 1542. The third son of Sir Randle Brereton of Shocklach (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 687), who presented him to the rectory of a moiety of Malpas, 1499 (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 607). Ormerod says he appears to have held it only for a few months, but he was rector of one of the moieties in 1535. (*Valor,* vol. V, p. 212.) He is also said to have held both moieties at one time. (*Ormerod, loc. cit.*) 1513–36, rector of Christleton. (*Ibid.,* p. 782.) 1511–ante 1528, rector of Bebington. (*Ibid.,* p. 439.) 1534–42, rector of Astbury. (*Ibid.,* vol. III, p. 26.) 1535, dean of the college of Astley, Warwickshire. (*Valor,* vol. III, p. 61.) Canon of St. Paul's, 1530–42. (*Hennessey,* p. 32.)

Richard Whitehead, *clerk,* presented 22 Nov., 1542, by Ottiwell Worseley, gent., by reason of a grant of the next presentation by abbot and convent, 1536; died before 28 March, 1543. Worseley was the monks' auditor in 1535 (*Valor,* vol. V, p. 205), and coroner, 1542 (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 91).

VIII. Rectors of St. Olaf's. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 345 *et seq.*)

Jordan de Marthale, *clerk,* presented by the bishop, "pro lapsu", 15 April, 1319; resigned before 28 June, 1323 (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 99; Helsby's reference to his death in this year is an error). Also rector of St. Peter's, from 1320 until at least 1339. (See above.)

Richard Payn, *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, 28 June, 1323; dead before 29 Aug., 1336.

Randle Leghton, *chaplain,* presented by the abbot and convent, 29 Aug., 1336; resigned 2 Oct., following. Presented, again, 24 Oct. Resigned, June, 1349.

Philip Ewyas, *clerk,* presented by the abbot and convent, 2 Oct., 1336; resigned in favour of Mr. Thomas Ewyas, 12th of same month, obtaining in exchange the rectory of Thurstaston, which he held until 1350. (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 509.)

Mr. Thomas Ewyas, presented by the abbot and convent, 12 Oct., 1336; resigned, 24th of same month. Occurs, 1332, as official of the archdeacon of Chester. (*Reg. Stretton,* vol. I, p. 134.) Aug., 1333, presented by abbot and convent to rectory of Thurstaston which he exchanged for St. Olaf as above. Feb., 1334, he was granted an episcopal licence for a year's absence for study. (Lich. Reg., vol. II, f. 109.)

Randle de Wico, *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 4 Nov., 1351, when the living is said to have been vacant for about two years. Had left it before the end of 1358.

Thomas de Hopley (or Hoppewell), *priest,* presented, 24 Dec., 1358, by the abbot and convent; died July, 1377.

William de Bromburgh, *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 1 Sept., 1377. 6 March, 1392, exchanged for Halkyn (Flint). *Morris* (p. 171) says that he was parson of Aldford, 1386, and that when Rich. II was deposed, he resigned and went on a pilgrimage abroad.

Richard Madeley exchanged with Bromburgh as above, and held this church until about 1393. (See page 67.)

Philip de Staunton, presented by Archbishop Arundel, 22 Nov., 1406. (Reg. Arundel, vol. I, f. 311.) He held the living of Pudding Norton, Norfolk, 1387–8. (*Cal. Pat., 1385–9,* pp. 378 and 399.)

Mr. Randle Prestbury, *doctor of decrees, priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 29 Sept., 1434; resigned almost at once. 1422–32, rector Northenden, patrons abbot and convent of St. Werburgh. (*Ormerod,* vol. III, p. 613.) 1432–ante 42, archdeacon of Stafford. (*Le Neve,* vol. I, p. 572.) 1433–42, prebendary of Lichfield. (*Ibid.,* p. 596.)

Mr. Christopher Knollys, *sacre pagine professor, priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 11 Nov., 1434; resigned Feb., 1436. Occurs, 1434, as precentor of Lichfield. (*C.P.L.,* vol. VIII, p. 480.)

Mr. Thomas Wemme, *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 13 Feb., 1436, and again, for some reason which does not appear, in May, 1439. He resigned before Sept., 1444. Sometime parson of Waverton and vicar of St. John's. Cantarist of St. Mary in the collegiate church, from 1435 till death 1446. (See above.)

Fr. William Pentryk, O.S.B., *priest.* Prior of the priory or cell of Lytham, presented by the abbot and convent 22 Sept., 1444. It is difficult to explain how or why the prior came to be acting as a parish priest.

Laurence Whalley, resigned from this living before 19 Jan., 1454. His presentation does not occur in the Lichfield registers.

John Crecy, *chaplain,* presented by the abbot and convent, 19 Jan., 1454; 1455, he became rector of West Kirby. 1460–2, canon of St. John's; sometime canon of Windsor and St. Stephen, Westminster, etc. (See above.)

Fr. John Henry Argentina, presented by the bishop, patron for this turn, 17 March, 1460. A Franciscan, ordained priest 1456. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI.) In July of that year, as chaplain to Queen Margaret, he was dispensed by the pope "to receive and retain for life any benefice with or without cure wont to be governed by secular clerks, even a parish church". (*C.P.L.*, vol. XI, p. 118.) In Nov., 1459, now rector of Whitchurch, Lincoln dio., dispensed to acquire another living (*ibid.*, p. 562) on the strength of which he obtained St. Olaf. April, 1462, exchanged Whitchurch for Dummer, Winchester dio. (*Cal. Pat., 1461–7*, p. 182.) If identical with John Argentine who was a canon of Lichfield, 1494–1508 (*Le Neve*, vol. I, pp. 597, 620), he died only in the latter year and may have retained this living until his death. At any rate, he is the last rector of whom we have any notice.

IX. Vicars of St. Oswald's. (Based upon *Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 305)

John Falloughs (or Fallowes), *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 23 Nov., 1311; died or resigned before 24 June, 1349.

Roger de Popehull, *chaplain,* presented by the abbot and convent, 24 June, 1349; had vacated this living by March, 1351. He was a monk of St. Werburgh's in 1354, being nominated by the abbot, about to go overseas, as one of his attorneys in England. (*Cal. Pat., 1354–8*, p. 106.)

Richard del Wode, *priest,* presented, 1 March, 1351. Occurs, in a deed of 1366, as feoffee for certain properties in Northgate Street, being then described as "sometime vicar of the church of St. Oswald". (*Cheshire Sheaf,* Third Series, vol. XXIX, p. 57.)

Hugo de Coton, *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 2 Oct., 1365; dead by Oct., 1374. Coton is a place name in Christleton.

Thomas Graume (or Gravine), *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 1374. He was still vicar in Dec., 1392 (Harl. 1994, f. 5), and probably continued to be so until 1403. John de Sudbury, who occurs in Helsby's list as vicar, 1380, is really mentioned, in the register, as proxy of the vicar at an inquisition held, in that year, in St. John's. (*Reg. Stretton*, vol. II, p. 185.)

William Hichekyn, *chaplain,* 2 April, 1403, presented by abbot and convent. Dead before April, 1421. 1402–3, vicar of Eastham, having been presented by the bishop. (*Ormerod*, vol. II, p. 406.) In 1408, he was executor of the will of one of his parishioners, Robert Schot, carpenter, who left him 6*s.* 8*d.*

Robert Drakelowe, presented by the abbot and convent, 4 April, 1421. (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, p. 4.) Dead before 9 Jan., 1442. Drakelowe is a Cheshire name.

John Barwe (or Barrow), *priest,* presented by the abbot and convent, 9 Jan., 1442. Dead before 22 Oct., 1469.

John Thomelynson, presented by abbot and convent, 22 Oct., 1461. Dead before 7 Oct., 1474. Ordained deacon to the title of St. Werburgh, 1449 (Lich. Reg., vol. X), so he may have been employed as a parochial chaplain or cantarist here before obtaining the vicarage.

Thomas Roogbotham, *chaplain,* presented by abbot and convent, 7 Oct., 1474. Resigned, 29 March, 1476. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 110; not died as Helsby says.) Licensed to preach by the bishop of Lichfield, 1457. (Lich. Reg., vol. XI, f. 93.)

Mr. John Godefelowe, *bachelor in both laws,* presented by abbot and convent, 29 March, 1476. Dead before 5 Dec., 1493, being called at that time doctor of decrees. 1467–93, canon and prebendary of St. John's. 1467–93, rector of Waverton. (*Ormerod,* vol. II, p. 789.)

Mr. Henry Rayneforde, *bachelor in decrees,* presented by abbot and convent, 5 Dec., 1493. Resigned before May, 1496; rector of Holy Trinity, 1482–1505. (See above.)

Mr. Robert Canlyn, *doctor of decrees,* presented by the abbot and convent, 7 May, 1496. (Reg. Morton, f. 153.) Dead before 21 Jan., 1513. Rector of Holy Trinity, 1507–13. (See above.)

Richard Daves, presented by the abbot and convent, 21 Jan., 1513.

Richard Done, occurs as vicar in 1545.

X. Prioresses of St. Mary's

Agatha de Dutton, occurs 1306. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 347.)

Alicia de Alderdelegh, lawfully elected, 16 Oct., 1312. (*Ibid.*) She occurs in Ormerod's pedigree of the Alderleys of Alderley. (Vol. III, p. 582.)

Emma de Vernon. Confirmation of her election, 29 Nov., 1316. (*Ormerod,* vol. I, p. 347.) Occurs as prioress, 1318. (*Ledger Book of Vale Royal,* Ed. Brownbill, p. 117.)

Johanna Molineux [?]. Daughter of Sir R. Molineux. Said to have been prioress in Edward II's reign (*Ormerod, loc. cit.*), but the only reference to her, which the author has been able to find in the Holmes collections (Harl. 7568, f. 190), says that she was a nun here, nothing of her being prioress. Hopkins (*Chester City Courts,* p. lix, n. 5) says that two prioresses, Johanna and Maria, appear to have been exercising joint control in 1331 (quoting Portmoot Roll 68, m 2).

Maria de Cestria, occurs 1331. (*Ibid.*) She was dead before July, 1349. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 347.)

Halewysa de Mottromsheved, 7 July, 1349, presented as prioress. (*Ibid.*) Occurs 1352. (*Morris*, p. 139.) Her family appears to have been a younger branch of the Mottrums of Mottrum. (*Ormerod*, vol. III, p. 692.)

Agnes de Dutton, occurs 1374. (Harl. 2101, f. 196.) Died on, or a little before, Monday after the feast of Trinity, 1386. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 347.)

Alice de Doncaster, 11 July, 1386, royal assent to her appointment. She was dead before 13 Feb., 1407. She appears to have been the daughter of William Doncaster, a leading merchant in the city, who possessed very considerable proprietary interests in North Wales, and was sheriff of Chester 1343. (*C.N.W.A.A.S.*, New Series, vol. II, p. 153 *et seq.*)

Elizabeth de Crue. Confirmation of her election by the earl and the bishop, 17 Feb., 1408. She was dead before Dec., 1441. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 347.) She may have been a daughter of David de Crue of Sonde. (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 313.) Her brother, Thomas Crue, was buried at Witlaxford, Sept., 1418. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, Third Series, vol. XVII, p. 38.)

Dame Alice Leyot. 14 Dec., 1441, appointed by the bishop, "*pro lapsu*". (Lich. Reg., vol. IX, f. 126.) She was formerly subprioress. She resigned before 16 Aug., 1449. Probably kin to John Leyot, dean of St. John's. (*Ormerod*, vol. I, p. 347.)

Beatrice le Heyre. Appointed by bishop, on resignation of late prioress. Formerly subprioress (*ibid.*); occurs as prioress, Sept., 1458. (Chester Plea Roll, 164m, 1 d.)

Elena Blundell. Occurs April, 1459. (Chester Plea Roll, 164m, 23.) She was dead before 3 July, 1473. (Lich. Reg., vol. XII, f. 107.)

Johanna Brett. Formerly subprioress; succeeded 4 Aug., 1473; still prioress in Sept., 1475. (Chester Plea Roll 179m, 31. Quoted, *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, Publications*, vol. LXVIII, p. 150 n.)

Elizabeth Rixton. First occurs in March, 1476. (*Ibid.*) She died 23 Oct., 1490. (C.R.R., 6 and 7 Hen. VII, m. 2(2) in *Thirty-seventh Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 622.)

Margery Pasmyth. Elected in the chapter house, in the presence of the archdeacon of Chester and his official, 1 March, 1491. (Reg. Morton, f. 57.) She was dead before 12 Aug., 1525. (*Letters and Papers of Hen. VIII*, vol. IV, pt. I, p. 704.)

Margery Tayllour. Royal assent to her election 25 Aug., 1525. (*Ibid.*, p. 715.) It appears from the rentals of the priory that she was still prioress 16 Oct., 1533, but had been succeeded by Elizabeth Grosvenor by 12 June, 1534. (P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, Rolls 125 and 126.)

Elizabeth Grosvenor, from before 12 June, 1534, until the dissolution, 21 Jan., 1540. She is said to have been a sister of Sir Thomas Grosvenor of Eaton. (*C.N.W.A.A.S.*, pt. IV, p. 469.)

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(*b*) In the Diocesan Registry, Lichfield.
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COUNCIL REPORT, MAY 1957 (113TH, 114TH YEARS)

THE Council has the honour to present its Report as follows :—

Since the last Report issued by the Society (for the year ended 28 February 1948) the Society has continued its work with five publications on a wide range of subjects, in which modern as well as medieval interests have been represented. On the modern side Miss Elizabeth Halcrow's edition of *Sir Peter Leicester's Charges to the Grand Jury at the Quarter Sessions* (1953) and Dr. T. S. Willan's *The Navigation of the River Weaver* (1951) show two sides of Cheshire life, a theoretical and a practical, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ; Mr. Thomas Woodcock's *Haslingden : A Topographical History* (1952) is a study in human geography, tracing the evolution of a most interesting Lancashire town mainly from the side of its legal institutions. Mr. A. Hopkins in *Selected Rolls of the Chester City Courts* (1950) has described the ancient city jurisdiction of Chester ; and in the important study *South Lancashire in the Reign of Edward II* (1949) Dr. G. H. Tupling has brought many new medieval facts to light and shown that disorder in the county was not confined to the period of the fifteenth century. There are thus five volumes of the new Third Series in eight years. That there has not been one each year can be accounted for by the increasingly high cost of publication and the fact that the Council has declined to raise the subscription above 30*s*. The Council hopes to increase the scale of production during the next quinquennium.

The Society has issued (1956) Mr. R. C. Jarvis's *Customs Letter-Books of the Port of Liverpool, 1711–1813* ; during the present year it hopes to publish Mr. D. Jones's *The Church in Chester, 1300–1540*. The former contained material drawn from the Liverpool Port books, the latter will be found an ecclesiastical complement to Mr. H. J. Hewitt's historical study of medieval Cheshire (New Ser. vol. 88).

Much significant work is to come. *The Winstanley Diary* edited by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kelly will trace the work of a nineteenth-century schoolmaster in the employment of the Unitarian Sir Benjamin Heywood. Mr. Highet has written a short account, from early family archives and other documents, of the beginnings of the Davenport family in Cheshire, and Mrs. Davies has contributed a study of the agricultural history of Cheshire in the eighteenth century. In these three works original documents from the two counties form the basis of the text.

There have been several changes in the composition of the Council since the last Report was published. Dr. M. Tyson resigned his office as Acting Honorary Secretary in 1951, a post he had occupied since 1940, but continues as a Council member.

To succeed him the Council appointed the Rev. John Flitcroft. Death has deprived the Council of four of its number, Sir R. C. Assheton, Major A. T. R. Houghton (who contributed " Materials for a history of the Ribble Salmon Fisheries " to the *Chetham Miscellanies, Vol. VIII*, New Ser., vol. 109), Dr. E. Bosdin Leech and Mr. A. P. Wadsworth. New members of the Council include Dr. W. H. Chaloner, Lord Clitheroe, Mr. C. L. S. Cornwall-Legh, Professor J. S. Roskell and Professor J. M. Wallace-Hadrill.

There are now 64 individual members and 139 libraries subscribing to the Society, as compared with 80 and 116 respectively in 1948. The Council hopes that members will do their utmost to bring the Society's claims and publications to the notice of others who may be interested. An increase in the number of individual members is particularly vital for the Society's future.

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